An Ethnographic Exploration of Gender Experiences in a New Zealand Surf Culture

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Sarah Corner

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Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic exploration of gender experiences in a New Zealand surf culture. I employed the methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to accumulate in-depth and descriptive qualitative data from the men and women who surf in the community of Raglan. I was especially interested in the rules surrounding the act of lining up – a systematic etiquette used to queue for waves. I inquired about surfers' struggles when lining up to deepen my understanding of the cultural behaviour of surfing and to help reveal implicit rules underpinning surf etiquette. As a female surfer, I was especially interested to understand the gender-relations between men and women in the waters in which I participated in. I discovered that subtle rules pertain to different groups of surfers and group emerged based on 'other' surfer characteristics. Although gender surfaced as a characteristic way of sorting surfers into groups, gender did not stand out more critical than others revealed throughout the research process. What was evident throughout the research was that men and women experience more commonalities in their surfing experiences than differences. Therefore, this research shows how the waves become a contested spaces for surfers and how surf culture serves as a site for resistance to gendered identities in contemporary Western society.

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1) Not all of these terms are exclusive to surfing culture but they all have particular resonance in this context.
2) Some of the definitions provided here may be contested by other cultural members.

Amping	A term used to describe one's excitement
Aerial	A manoeuvre whereby the surfer turns above the lip of the wave, and launches into the air before re-entering back onto the face of the wave.
Barrelled	A term used to describe riding inside the curl of a wave.
Barrelling waves	A hollow breaking wave providing fast and steep faces. Competent surfers can often ride within these breaking waves, a manoeuvre also referred to as *a barrel*, or *getting barrelled.*
Bash the lip	A manoeuvre where the surfer directs the surfboard up the face of the wave impacting with the lip of the wave, which in turn enables the surfer to turn 180º back down onto the wave.
Beach break	A sandy bottomed surf break that shifts and changes with the tidal currents, for example Ngarunui Beach in Raglan. A great surf spot for beginners offering less challenging conditions than the nearby point breaks.
Blow in	A derogatory term describing a surfer who is not from the area.
Bodyboard	A short soft wave riding device which the person rides in the prone position.
Bottom turn	Functional manoeuvre whereby the surfer turns at the base of the wave, providing speed and projecting the surfer back up the *face of the wave.*
Carving	A term used to describe turns on the wave.
Close-out	Is a term used to describe the action of the wave that has simultaneously *sectioned* and is no longer ride-able.
Comb	A tool for roughing up the wax on the top surface of the surfboard.

Cutback/cutty	A manoeuvre whereby the surfer turns back into the *pocket* of the wave.
Down the line	Refers to a surfer riding on the face of the wave.
Dropping in	When a surfer takes a wave out of turn which is monitored by the rules of the *line-up.*
Duck-dive	A manoeuvre whereby a surfer ducks their head underneath an already broken wave in order to avoid the wave's momentum pulling them back towards shore, a manoeuvre saving time and energy.
Face of the wave	The front part of the wave on which a surfer rides.
Fast waves	Fast peeling waves that require a higher level of ability to ride.
Floater	A manoeuvre where the surfer rides on the top of the breaking wave.
Floundering	A word used when describing a surfer who appears to be out of their depth and/or out of control.
Getting barrelled	See *barrelled.*
Green wave	a term used to describe the face of the wave as distinct from white-water.
Grommet	A term used to indicate a young and keen surfer, also used in a derogatory manor to reference a surfer considered to lack ability in the *line-up.*
Indicators	Also known as Indies; Indicators is the farthest *point break* in Raglan and is characteristically known for its faster and more difficult waves. A surfing spot known for its extreme localism and territoriality.
Inside	The person who is positioned closest to where the wave is, or about to break.
J*ump rock*	A specific place or set of rocks that makes entering the water at Manu Bay easier.
Kook	A derogatory term used to describe an 'other'
Leggy	Leg-rope or leash; A cord attaching a surfer to their surfboard.

Left	The direction the face of the wave is breaking in relation to the surfer.
Line-up	The queue of surfers waiting to catch waves.
Longboards	A surfboard over nine foot in length.
Lully	A term referring to the length of time between set waves, usually with great distance and time.
Making a section	Successfully manoeuvring past a *section* of a wave. For example, part of the wave breaks in front of the surfer and in order to make the section, he or she rides either up and over the breaking section (*floater*) or, down and around the white-water (*bottom turn*). The objective of the manoeuvre is to get back onto the *face of the wave*.
Manu Bay	This is one of the three point breaks in the Raglan community and is typically the most crowded of the three. It is most famous of the three points based on tourism.
Massive airs	See aerial.
Mini-mal	A round-nosed surfboard usually between seven and eight foot in length particularly suited for beginners.
Nose-dive	While trying to catch a wave, the nose of the board hits the water first a causes a surfer to flip.
One wave in	An expression used to signal the intension of it being last wave before getting out of the water.
Out the back	Past the breaking waves where most surfers sit waiting their turn in the *line-up*.
Outsides	This is a distant point break beyond all the other three point breaks typically producing the biggest and fastest waves. Not a spot for beginners. One must have a high level of ability and local knowledge to surf there.
Party waves	A term used to describe more than one person on a wave at a time.
Pocket	The part of the wave closest to the breaking curl. Riding in or near the pocket provides speed for a surfer.

Point break	A wave breaking because of the rocky shoreline underneath. Typically waves that break on a point are more mechanical than a *beach break* and are therefore easier to ride because *duck-diving* is more minimal as a surfer is able to paddle around the peeling wave.
Points	A series of three point breaks in Raglan ranging in difficulty. The first point is called *Indicators*, the second *Whale Bay* and the third is referred to as *Manu Bay*.
Pull off	Refers to when a surfer has finished their ride on the wave.
Pumping	A term used to describe good quality consistent waves.
Rails	The sides of the surfboard.
Reef Break	A breaking wave over a reef which is characteristically shallow, fast, hollow barrelling and presents much danger because of these elements. A reef can be sharp and potentially cut any surfer who falls of a wave as bottom is shallow. A reef break presents the pinnacle of surfing ability and is ridden by surfers of great ability.
Right	The direction the wave is breaking in relation to the surfer.
Ripper	A term used to describe someone who appears to be surfing well.
Section	A part of a wave that breaks in a unique manner in response to the contours of the seafloor. A wave can be made up of many sections and can break in many fashions, for example, a *barrelling* section, a *close-out* section, a *fast* section, or a *slow* section.
Sergeant's Table	A *section* of rocks at Whale Bay that take a bit of manoeuvring to get around.
Shaka	A universal (yet sometimes modified) hand gesture where the palm is closed, but the thumb and pinkie extend in a waving motion.
Shoulder	Refers to the outside periphery of where the wave is breaking and the *take off* zone.
Shortboards	Is a type of surfboard that typically has a pointy nose, three fins, and a low volume and is less than seven feet in length particularly

	suited for advanced surfers. This term also represents a certain style of riding technique that is specific for this type of surfboard.
Sit	Where a person positions themselves according to where the wave is breaking in the *line-up*.
Slash up the wave	A saying used to describe a surfer and their riding style which generally would create a lot of fast turns and *spray*.
Slow waves	When a wave is peeling slowly and usually produces little speed for surfers to utilise.
Snaked	Another word for someone taking their turn ahead of the person on *the inside*.
Spray	Trail of water created when a surfer turns sharply on the wave.
Spring-suit	A short arm, short legged wetsuit best utilised in the warmer months of the year.
Staunched off	Non-verbal or verbal communication between surfers signalling to one surfer(s) by the other(s) they are not welcome.
Steamer	A full body wetsuit.
Stoked	A verb used to describe an inner joy; a feeling associated with surfing which is often used when describing feeling after a surf has finished, or the afterglow.
Surfing the beach	Refers to a surfing spot in Raglan that ranges in swell size but typically is the place where surfers learn. It is typically a safer environment for beginners in comparison with *the points*.
Surfing the point	Refers to when a surfer surfs *the points* in Raglan. This can further represent a progression in learning ability from *surfing the beach*.
Take off	The spot a surfer positions themselves in order to catch a wave. Also, the *take off* can represent the act of catching the wave and getting to your feet.
Top turns	Functional manoeuvre whereby the surfer turns at the top of the wave, providing speed and projecting the surfer back down the face of the wave.

Toothpick	A term used to describe a surfboard that is small, typically meaning it is thin, short with little volume.
Trying the points	A progressional step up from *surfing the beach*.
Up the back	Refers to the spot best suited for catching waves where the *line-up* typically begins.
Whale Bay	One of the three main point breaks in Raglan that is characterised by slower moving and shorter wave rides.

Chapter One: Introduction to a Surfing Journey

> 'Waves are always changing and the water is never still'
> (Clifton Evers 2004: 30)

The above quote captures the transient, diverse and ever changing landscapes of the waves as well as the global surf culture. Deeply ineffable feelings allure members to this pastime as they ride waves, paddle amongst salt laden waters and capture the spirit of the *stoke*[1]. While myths of the perfect wave linger in the hearts of dedicated surfers, members of this transient community are bound by a common cause, to find and surf the best waves. Enthusiast of various ages, nationalities, ethnicities and genders paddle out to wherever there are waves to make up the changing social landscape of the global surf culture. Popular surfing destinations range from the California coastline to the remote islands of the South Pacific, and from the big surf in Hawaii to more obscure destinations such as Morocco. Wherever waves break, surfers will seek them. Buckley (2002) estimated there are ten million surfers worldwide in search for this leisure activity and roughly two hundred thousand of them are New Zealanders (Hall: 2008: 11).

The tribal surfing community began long ago somewhere in the heart of Polynesia where surfing surfaced as a spiritual endeavour, a way of establishing social hierarchy and a great form of play. Anthropologist Dr. Elson Best documented accounts of his visit to Aotearoa when he wrote, " Maori excelled [in the ocean]…this was seen in [their] powers as swimmer[s], [their] dexterity in surf-riding…[which] was practised with and

[1] The *stoke* is an example of surf culture argot and could be described as the intensity in feeling surfers experience during and/or after a surfing session. It is a common expression used in the global surf culture and is described in more detail in the Glossary. Throughout the remainder of the thesis other examples of cultural argot will appear and also be italicised, usually only once.

without a board, and also in small canoes, both plank and canoe known by the same name, *kopapa*" (Hall 2008: 10)[2]. Best further recognised how "young women sometimes joined the sport". Even though surfing is still predominantly a male activity from the numbers in participation, to who reaps the competitive rewards, to who consumes the majority of the surfing industry (Henderson 2001), women from various backgrounds partake in the act of 'wave-sliding' (Ford and Brown 2006).

New generations of surfers have emerged in New Zealand since Elson Best's days, both men and women alike. Although surf culture is still led by the 'fratriarchy', or the 'boys club', (Booth 2000), the current generation of cultural members also includes top female surfing athletes such as Paige Hareb[3] (aged 17), Wini Paul (18), Jessica Santorik (21), and Alexis Poulter (16). These women continue to lead in national competitive arenas and help to inspire and motivate female surfers around the country as more women enter the waters of New Zealand and discover what it is like to be a 'surfer girl'. However, as women participate in this expanding cultural phenomenon, their position as women are continually viewed and experienced as subordinate to men. My curiosity begins with an attempt to better understand gendered experiences in surf culture and how gender-relations are played out in the waters of New Zealand today.

Shilling (2005: 18) argues, "[d]espite its potential to mobilise people, sport in the west has a long history of perpetuating inequalities by excluding or marginalising from its spaces those considered 'others' on the basis of their racialised or gendered bodily

[2] Sandra Hall quoting Elson Best, *Maori as He Was: A Brief Account of Maori Life as it was in Pre-European Days.* Wellington: Aotearoa Board of Science and Art, Manual #4, 1924, pp130-131.
[3] As of April 2008, Paige Hareb was placed third in the World Qualifying Series after winning the Margaret River Drug Aware Pro Women's Five Star WQS Event. Jessica Santorik recently won the Rip Curl Clean and Clear Women's Pro (Curl Magazine Autumn 2008 issue # 15). The other women featured in the line-up are doing well around the country placed as the top for their age groups.

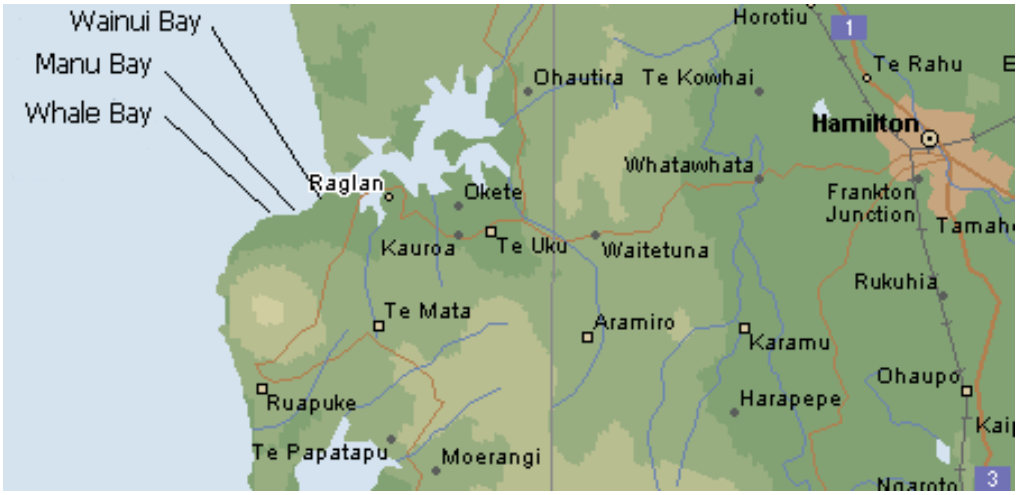
identities". This is because sports, such as surfing, have the ability to both reflect and extend broader patterns of social exclusion and inclusion of participants. The sporting arena provides an interesting social space in which men and women are found to negotiate their gendered identities, and how they are to be understood, produced and accepted in western society today (Scraton and Flintoff 2001). As men and women shift positions in the surfing social landscape, they jostle and negotiate gender in order to construct and sustain their identities. Because of this continual shift, surfing social spaces are dynamic, fluid and forever changing as participants contribute to the diversity of the social experiences that are never still in the water (Evers 2004). More importantly, surfers are able to change their positioning in the social setting with growing opportunities to challenge and resist traditional gender roles. Gender is recreated, performed and resisted differently through sport (Wheaton 2004) and although it is debatable as to whether surfing is sport, lifestyle or artform (Ford and Brown 2006), 'sport as identity' becomes a key tool for exploring gender boundaries and a space to subvert traditional gender roles. Thus, the cultural arena of surfing becomes a vital terrain for researching gender relations and for understanding the social positions of the men and women who participate.

Prior to the undertaking of this research I was not able to articulate my growing intrinsic logic that women had different ways of performance, negotiation and understandings of their surfing experience when compared to men. Determined to understand the gender power relationships more theoretically, I began an ethnographic exploration in gender experiences of surf culture in Raglan, a small town on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island with a winter population of 3,500, and a summer population of 10,500. Raglan is a well renowned surfing destination famous for its unique

left hand point breaks. Immortalised in the 1964 surf movie *The Endless Summer*, Raglan has experienced thousands of surfers flocking to its rocky shoreline to find what Lonely Planet (2008) calls, "one of the longest left hand point breaks in the world" (Atkinson 2008). Raglan sits just forty-five minutes west of Hamilton and two hours south of Auckland[4]. Such close proximity allows for easy access for the city day-trippers to enjoy Raglan's surf and for local residents to 'go out'. Going out in Raglan however, does not indicate leaving town, rather it means heading for the waves. Locals and tourists alike enjoy the three left-hand point breaks of Manu Bay, Whale Bay and Indicators. These can be viewed from the vantage point of Raglan's Wainui Beach Reserve[5]. With Raglan's ever growing popularity as a surfing destination the community is affected socially, politically and economically by surf tourism.

The surfing spaces of Raglan were the spaces in which I live, work and immersed myself for my research. As an active surfer and a budding cultural anthropologist, I found no better way to discover the deeply rooted traditions of this tribal community than to jump into the waters that are so central to the Raglan community and my current lifestyle. My initial interests were female surfers and their gendered surfing experiences. I had been living, working and participating as a surfer in this community for the better part of six years, and I found myself becoming intrigued with other women in the water. The research process allowed me to reflect upon both my cultural identity as a surfer and to

[4] Please refer to Photograph A on page 5.
[5] Please see Photograph A for a view from atop the Wainui reserve looking westward towards the three point breaks; Manu Bay, Whale Bay and Indicators on page 6.



Map A: *The West Coast.* Raglan is situated on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island. It is a 40 minute drive from Hamilton and a two hour drive south from Auckland. This map show the Raglan harbour, the Raglan Township nestled within the harbour and the location of the point breaks along the coast. Wainui Bay depicted on the map, is also referred to as Ngarunui Beach while Manu Bay and Whale Bay are immediately around the headland.

Photograph A: *View atop Wainui Reserve.* This photograph was taken from the top of Wainui Reserve and depicts the surfing spaces of Raglan's surf culture. In the foreground is Ngarunui Beach. Manu Bay, Whale Bay and Indicators point breaks are in the distance. The beach is the only place to surf on this day as the points are visibly flat. April, 2008.

better understand the gendered perspectives and positioning of the men and women who participate in this activity.

Another motivation was an article written by Douglas Booth (2000: 4) entitled, *From Bikinis to Boardshorts: Wahine and the Paradoxes of Surf Culture.* Booth questioned, "Does the consumption of surf-specific and related products by women and their forays into the water on surfboards portent a new gender order of surfing?", to which he concluded, "before any claims of a new gender order in surfing have validity, firm evidence of deep structural change is required" (2000: 17). I felt immediately compelled to contest his claim, but I was unsure exactly how and/or why I felt this urge. The only thing I did know was the desire to loudly declare the female entitlement in the pecking order of surfing that I had observed. I was both intrigued and confused by Booth's conclusions and sought to rectify my concerns through a piece of research devoted to female surfers. My interest was further engaged by Ford and Brown's book entitled *Surfing and Social Theory* which highlighted the growing need for gender-related research in surf culture, specifically how "male and female surfers are shifting positions to construct and sustain their gendered identities" (2006: 171). How do men and women shift positions in the water to better understand and create their own gender identities?

One approach to gender research in the domain of surfing may be through consideration of the gendered body. While Ford and Brown acknowledge Booth's macro perspectives, and contributions to the global surf culture and its changing and dynamic gender relations, they suggest that researchers give attention to micro perspectives of the "'everyday' female surfer and their gendered experiences" (Ford and Brown 2006: 172). At the time of my research journey, there was literature written about surf culture (Booth

2000(a), 2000(b), 2004, 2008, Evers 2005, Fisk 1989, Hall 2008, Henderson 2001, Ormrod 2008, Pearsons 1979, Waitt 2008, Young 2003), yet not much of the literature was focus specifically on women, particularly on the 'everyday' women's surfing experiences. I could see a need to study gender perspectives of Raglan surfers.

Since my journey began, I have made many observations as a female surfer in the water. I began to think more deeply about my cultural surroundings and especially about my female companions. The early motivation for this research stemmed from my original feeling of displacement upon moving to the community. It had been six years since I moved to the community of Raglan and six years since I enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University of Waikato. Living in a small community while studying was a lifestyle I enjoyed and surfing seemed a good alternative to snowboarding, my first board-sport. Snowboarding had been a catalyst in creating my identity and my love for this pastime was so ingrained in me it was hard for me to leave this lifestyle and this part of my identity behind.

After living deep in the heart of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the U.S.A. for the seven years prior to moving to Raglan, and working as a professional ski patroller, I realised how important it was for me to be immersed in the natural environment. Yet, the new board-riding technique of surfing proved to be harder than expected, and even after years of practice, I still had days where I could not get to my feet. I found it to be both challenging and rewarding at the best of times, and the struggles in learning led me to think more deeply about the way I experienced it. Because I was a new member of surf culture, I fell from holding prestige and honour on the mountain, to having no status in the water. If anything, I was having a crisis of identity and questioned the validity of my

participation in surfing. I started to lose interest and felt myself detach; I became strangely cynical. This was further complicated by actions of other cultural members as I often felt marginalised in the water. I believed this was mainly due to my outsider status (American, foreign accent, middle range ability level) and I struggled to become an insider in my new cultural surroundings. I wondered how long I had to live in Raglan before I would be considered a local surfer. In great contrast to the ski field environment, surfers are competing for a resource that is only accessible in small spaces and where the highly sought after commodity of a wave only arrives at lengthy intervals and short bursts. This all seemed a far cry from snowboarding where space was wide open, where I felt solitude and ease, and where crowds were escapable in the nearby backcountry.

By the time I arrived in the postgraduate arena, my eyes had been opened wide to the possibility of ethnography. I carried out a brief research project on surf culture focusing on the way surfers communicated both verbally and non-verbally in the waters of Raglan. A small personal revolution happened as I used theory to understand a pastime with which I had a love/hate relationship. It began to make more sense. Not only did it help me reflect on surf culture out of the water, it seemed to give me a new sense of confidence while I was surfing. Ethnography as a method of inquiry would be a useful tool for exploring surf culture, and more specifically, may fill the gap in the research looking at 'everyday' female surfers and their experiences. Running commentary swam through my head as I paddled around the surf *line-up* questioning what was going on. What were the gendered behaviours that surfers exhibit and how are they experienced by men and women?

Learning about surfing not only started on a board at the beach, but also ‘hanging out’ in Raglan on the street, in the cafes, and down at the bar getting to know the ‘locals’. These are all key spaces in which my identity as a ‘surfer’ developed. Moreover, it was in these spaces that I was able to get a more holistic understanding of the complexities of the surfing hierarchy and how it is experienced on an everyday basis. My status as a female surfer continued to both intrigue and frustrate me as I become inherently aware of the hierarchical struggles and exclusionary behaviour directed towards me and I often wondered if this was a result of my gendered identity. I experienced such exclusion not only in the water while trying to catch waves, but on the streets when discussing surfing with ‘the boys’. One night while working at the local café I was approached by one of the ‘local boys’ who remarked, “You surf don’t you, but I know you can’t really surf because you get scared on the big sets and don’t go for it”. Because of comments like these, I was interested to understand if other women in Raglan shared my experiences and how they interpreted men in the water. How did it feel to be a woman in the water? What was it about surf etiquette that is so confusing? Does everyone just *drop-in* on everyone? Does etiquette even exist anymore? These questions and associated struggles played a major role in the focus of this research. I wished to gain a greater perspective on how others perceived their identities as surfers as my own surfing identity was forming and growing. As I reflect upon an incident that occurred last November, I highlight the struggles women may find in their surfing experiences, and the motivation and validity for undertaking this research.

Last November…

It is a clear and calm mid-November morning. The sun is low in the sky as it is early, six am or so. The waves are small and clean and the conditions are perfect for surfing the beach. Only two of us are out as we catch the two foot sets that come through occasionally. It is *lully*, the swell is dropping, and the points haven't broken for a week. It feels great to be in the water, catching the *lefts* as the *peaks* come through. Only Paul and I are out and we chat briefly about the lack of crowds for a Monday morning, the *spring-suit* I am wearing, and the mobility I am appreciating after a long winter in a *steamer*. We have the waves to ourselves for about an hour before more people begin to arrive. Four boogie boarders spend their time in the shallows and a few boys come *out the back* with us.

I can see the swell lines approaching on the horizon. It is Paul's turn and he is in position. His board is at least nine foot in length and he is catching waves well before they break. I wonder if he is going to paddle for this one. I do not want to appear too keen, so I carefully watch his movements, watch the peak move closer, and slowly lie back down on my board. If he does not take this wave then I will as the wait seems to be getting longer.

A couple of strokes have me closer in line, and closer to him. I can feel my anticipation rising as he turns. With only two paddles he is up. I see his body crest over the back of the wave as he peels off *down the line*. The sun is rising over the reserve and illuminates the water. It is another gorgeous day in Raglan.

I see a familiar face paddling on *the shoulder* heading straight towards me. He is very distinctive with his bleached hair, blue board and foreign accent, a man whom I have known for over a year and I still cannot remember his name. He paddles over to where I am sitting but manoeuvres enough to be on my inside. I contemplate this for a moment, but assume it's nothing as it is my turn. He asks how I am and I reply with the normal pleasantries which include my comments about the waves thus far. We converse for a while as he informs me of his trip to Indonesia, the hot weather, and his improving skills. He then makes a remark that still fascinates me. "No *dropping-in* eh?"

I nod with confusion as I lie back down on my board. I begin to paddle out towards the wave as the sets are in the distance. The wave has been peaking in the same spot all morning, so I position myself accordingly. I turn and begin to paddle. He follows suit, turns as I do, and paddles for the wave. One, two, three strokes and I feel the wave's momentum. I look down the line and push the board away from my body. As I get to my feet he gives me a quick glance, and then takes the wave. He has dropped in on me.

Paul sees what happens and quickly starts with the pep talk so typical of my other male companions when he yells, "Just go! Call him off! It was your wave! Get more aggressive when that happens!"

Back to the present task…

Last November's experience created room for me to explore gender differences in the water. Because I was (and still am) so regularly dropped in on by male surfers, I spent

the better part of a year contemplating the methods surfers use and the rules that govern the surfing experience. Although such concepts such as localism, territoriality, and/or nationality could be utilised to analyse last November's 'incident', what grabbed my attention most notably was gender. I wondered why 'Mr. Blue Board' claimed the authority. Did he break the rules because I was a woman, and if so, how must I surf to gain his respect? Perhaps I did not show evidence of 'masculine traits' while in the water as I was told to 'get more aggressive' by my male friend. Perhaps I should have said something when he paddled up and took the *inside*. Typically, a surfer first in line has the right of way and *dropping-in* is viewed as bad etiquette in surfing. It is fair to ask, was he ignorant of the rule even though he stated it before he broke it? Why would I have to call someone off a wave that I had been queuing for? What are the rules, why are they broken and how is gender an issue in all of this?

Ford and Brown (2006) say that there is not enough research looking at gender relations in the water, and that we must go beyond "gender legitimacy" between masculinity and femininity in their "historically constructed" binary opposition. Gender must be explored as a "pluralised complex of masculinity and femininity" and valued as "located rather than universal, dynamic rather than fixed, and contested rather than agreed" (Ford and Brown 2006: 84). This research explores how female surfer's experiences in Raglan are fluid, dynamic and changing.

This thesis examines the gender experiences in the Raglan surf culture and how gender is enacted in such spaces. It specifically addresses the research question of what are the gendered experiences in surf culture and how are they enacted in the water? Of special interest was exploring the rules of the *line-up* - a systematic way that surfers

queue for waves - and the processes for learning surf etiquette. I inquired about surfers' attitudes towards the struggles that exist throughout these processes to deepen my understanding of 'appropriate' behaviour within surfing culture and to help reveal the implicit rules underpinning etiquette, gender relations and the rules of dropping-in. This research examines surfing as a contested space and a site for resistance and transformation for female identities in contemporary Western society. It is through this piece of research I wish to share the voice of others, and most importantly, that of female surfers in Raglan.

The style of writing throughout this thesis will incorporate quotes from transcribed material, journal entries, and conversations recollected from my participant observation sessions. I will use narrated accounts as a reflection of my experience within my cultural surrounding by drawing on past experiences in the water, on the streets, and from 'nights out' at the local bar. Narrative is a "primary way through which human beings organise their experiences into temporally meaningful episodes" (Polkinghorne 1988:1). Narration is a mode of reasoning and a means for representing my cultural surroundings, and the way in which I best express how I navigate as a female surfer. In the words of Reed-Danahay (2005: 100), writing one's reflections from past experiences is one "role in ethnographic writing of the ethnographer's own emotions and feeling during the fieldwork". Michael Moerman (1998) also addresses the importance of narration in research. It is vital for me to utilise my voice and the voice of others to presents the 'real' and 'authentic'. So, rather than sticking to a rigid depiction of a cultural world "standardized [in a] finished text over the shoulder of an imagined native", I will "believe in the line-by-line production of ongoing actual native talk" (Moerman

1988: 5). Narration, therefore, is chance to reflect upon and make meaning of my experiences and those of others around me as it "is ineluctably tied to the human experience" and "trying to suppress it undermines the very foundation of the human science" (Richardson: 1990: 21). Two forms of narration will be utilised throughout the remainder of the thesis, one will be tied to my personal experiences, and the other will be the voices of the participants generated in interviews, focus groups and participant observation sessions.

Thesis Structure

The remainder of this thesis consists of five chapters. In Chapter Two, I describe the methods employed for this research and introduce the theoretical perspective applied in the research. That theory is Bourdieu's notions of 'social space'. I believe this particular theory helps to make meaning of my copious amounts of data and has played a major role in the production of this thesis. In Chapter Three, I explore the surfing spaces of Raglan with particular reference to the act of *lining-up* by looking more deeply into the appropriate 'rules' in this space. Chapter Four explores men's experiences in the line-up and discusses how the line-up can be viewed as a male dominated space. Chapter Five explores how the women of Raglan negotiate their identities and experiences of surf culture in relation to the surfing spaces of the line-up. Lastly, in Chapter Six, I discuss the surfing spaces of the line-up with regards to the interplay of men and women's experiences revealed in Chapters Four and Five. Also presented in Chapter Six are the key conclusions from this thesis and possible directions for future research.

Chapter Two: Research Methods and Theoretical Perspective

This chapter is organised into two main parts. Firstly, I will describe the methods used to further capture the gendered experiences of Raglan surfers. Secondly, I will present the theoretical perspective employed as a framework for this study.

The primary methods I employed were participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, and focus group sessions. The secondary data collection techniques consisted of field notes, photographs, journal entry, and also included the feedback I received while in the participant/observer role. I will begin by briefly addressing the primary research methods with a short journal entry.

Methods

I pull off the wave and I sink deeper into the ocean. While my head is submerged in the water, I relish in the memory of my ride. As I surface, I take a breath and glance around. At the boat ramp I have a full view of the point break in front of me. At least twenty people dot the horizon. I contemplate my research methods as I lie back down on my board and begin to paddle. With one arm stretching over the other, I think again about my method. I am clearly unable to write with the amount of water running through my fingers. I could quickly catch a wave in and write down my observation, but that would involve time across *the rocks* and time spent drying off. I paddle wide back towards the *line- up*, the sets are slowly getting bigger and I want to conserve my energy. I navigate through the rubber kingdom and find my position. I sit up on my surfboard and look around. Three men *take off* on the same wave. Four girls sit patiently on the shoulder. A couple of *grommets* paddle furiously on *the inside*. Only two foot this morning and everyone is hungry. My thoughts turn to my position. How do I affect the space as a female, middle range ability level, foreign accent, sometimes a local and sometimes not? I realise that I am an insider as I have a board, I check the swell, and occasionally I can predict the conditions. I buy the paraphernalia in the surf shops, and on a good day I can ride a wave with, dare I say, a little style. Yet, I continue to struggle with my multiple roles as the researcher and trying to understand this culture as an outsider. Yes, I am surfing, participating in the act of catching a wave, but more often these days, I am sitting on the side of this line-up observing the space, watching the behaviour of my friends, my companions and even the ones who challenge my position. Am I really an insider now, as I make mental notes? Or is this merely another debate within the methodology itself?

(Journal entry: June 6th, 2007)

Ethnography

The discipline of anthropology assumes that "cultural beliefs, values and behaviours are learned, patterned, and chang[ing]" (Morse and Richards 2002: 172). Important here is how ethnography can be a vital tool for documenting people in the field in order to capture the essence of their environments. Ethnography is in many ways the essence of anthropology in that it allows the researcher to go "out and stalk culture in the wild" (Bernard 2006: 344). At the core of the ethnographic journey is the use of participant observation which takes various forms, peers into various cultural realms and describes the field from a multitude of perspectives; contemporary urban ethnographies produce just as valuable an insight into humanity as those of traditional non-urban ethnographies from anthropologists of past generations (Bernard: 2006).

I chose ethnography to address my research question pertaining to gendered experiences in surf culture. It was of my opinion that there was no better way to accomplish an ethnographic exploration into Raglan's surf culture than to jump into the ocean on a surf board, and see what 'the natives' were doing. The above journal entry, however, highlights the ongoing hidden dilemma that a researcher battles as the 'insider' in the researcher role who is already embedded within the cultural surroundings. To paraphrase Laberee (2001), many contemporary researchers look beyond this insider/outsider dichotomy with their adopted reflexive narrative and leave this dualism behind, for the narration will allow the reader to create their own visionary style in the researched space. According to Laberee (2001: 99), "[t]here are issues concerning the conceptual definition of insiderness and its relationship to outsiderness, and the search to

understand insiderness is considered revealing in an epistemological manner that is considered inaccessible to an outsider".

Originally, I felt overwhelmed with tackling what I believed to be an all encompassing research space that included surfing space in Raglan from town through to the individual spaces people surf. As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, Raglan holds an abundance of spaces worthy of description and analysis when studying surf culture. The surfing hierarchy is reinforced and challenged in various spaces in the community: in town, in the cafes, the bars, on the rocks, the beach, the point breaks, or from the *beach* and *point* car parks. These spaces are places to 'gaze', or peer into surf culture and understand how individuals and groups negotiate their surfing identities. For example, in town, one may observe surf culture down 'Volcom lane' on a Wednesday morning as locals talk surf while sipping coffee, or by standing on the street corner by Tongue and Groove Café watching as people walk past. One may witness amazing displays of deep companionships between cultural members as they greet one another in the streets with quick slaps to the hand, embracing hugs, or by throwing *shakas* from across the road. On the beach, one may observe people checking the swell conditions while perched on a bench, or by observing the surf school lining-up as surf instructors demonstrate 'proper' techniques.

The gaze becomes more focused, and the surfing hierarchies more evident, as I head towards the three point breaks. These points are known in the community as Manu Bay, Whale Bay and Indicators, respectively as they continue around the headland[6]. Each point break represents a different surfing space; each possesses unique qualities such as wave size and formation. Most importantly, each point break has a different 'feel' in the

[6] Refer to Photograph B for the surf space of the points on Page 18.

Photograph B: *The Points.* In this photograph are the three point breaks in Raglan. Manu Bay sits in the foreground, Whale Bay in the middle and Indicator is seen breaking in the distance. The line-up is observable at each point break, yet is mostly visible with the thick crowd levels at Manu Bay. This photograph depicts a busy day for surfing with limited wave selection. This picture was taken from Wainui Reserve, Anzac day 2008.

line-up. The line-up is the systematic way surfers queue for waves and has various dynamics that affect the space according to the social, political, cultural, and geographical makeup of that space at any given moment in time. For example, hierarchical relations are played out differently based on physical (rocks, sand, wave size and shape) and social geography (skill, ability and social relationships). Importantly, is how surfers' access waves while combining the physical and the social conditions in order to understand how surfing plays out differently in each surfing location. Further, surfers must contend with social hierarchies that monitor and reinforce who has the access to waves based on physical prowess, courage, and risk and is monitored by the 'fratriarchy' in the wider surf culture (Booth 2000). In Raglan, this fratriarchy is reinforced by the dominant male figures successful in the competitive arenas and who feature frequently in New Zealand surfing magazines. It was the diversity in the Raglan waters, and the changing social landscapes that initially intrigued me.

I discovered unintentionally that the line-up was the prevailing space for displaying social status and accumulating power in surf culture. The line-up was the space in which I spent most of my time in the participant observer role. At the beginning of the research process, I believed that the line-up provided the most obvious space for carrying out participant observation sessions. I intuitively knew to 'go the points' or 'surf on the beach' in order to gather the data I was looking for. The surfing space of the line-up is the most visible space in which social hierarchies are played out. The researcher and the surfer alike can both observe who is catching waves and who is not, and who is *dropped-in* on, verbally abused, or *snaked* in the line-up. The line-up is the space in

which surfers continually produce and negotiate identities based on displays of dedication, commitment and prowess.

My participant observation sessions took place on average of two hours a day over the span of a year, and focused on a wide surfer demographic consistent with the many traditional surfer images that reflect a variety of ethnic, national, class and gender backgrounds. For example, there are the locally dominant males who are typically between twenty to thirty years old. All of these 'boys' either compete professionally or surf with fellow competitors. With exceptional waves on offer, Raglan produces some of the best surfers in New Zealand and it is no wonder it is one of the country's most popular surfing destinations. In saying this, some of the best surfers in New Zealand are not all male. Many of the up and coming best female surfers also live in Raglan, however, they are considerably fewer in number than the male surfers. Other components of the local surfer population are 'the *grommets*' or younger kids; 'the old guys' who have been surfing for decades; 'the women' who I view as middle-aged ladies on *mini-mals*; and 'the beginners' who surf mainly at the beach. Another typical demographic on the Raglan waves is the domestic travellers (mainly from Hamilton or Auckland) who closely follow forecasts and come for a good day's surf session. Other surfers who paddle out into the Raglan waters could be classified as the 'internationals' who have travelled from all over the world and are typically referred to in Raglan derogatory argot as the '*blow-ins'*. From this large, diverse, and constantly shifting surfing population, I recruited nine surfers to participate in interviews and focus group discussions; seven were women and two were men. The sample size, though small, was consistent with exploratory ethnography and allowed me to investigate my research question focusing on gender

experiences in surf culture. I introduce the interviewees in the following sections with a brief discussion looking at the criteria I employed when selecting the participants.

Data Collection

Participants and Semi-structured Interviewing

In total, I conducted four tape-recorded semi-structured interviews with four key informants; two women and two men. I assured all interviewees of anonymity and, because of this, I have given all interview and focus group participant's pseudonyms[7]. I selected interviewees so there would be a variety of background reflected in the qualitative evidence produced by the interviews. I was not interested to label a surfer for their insider/outsider status, for in Raglan this is a highly contestable phenomenon. The female interviewees were selected for three key reasons; 1) to cover a range of surfing ability, 2) variety in the accumulated time living in Raglan, and 3) difference in place of birth. I was not aware of their ethnicity and did not inquire. The first participant was Laura (aged 26), a New Zealand-born, competitive surfer who has been living in Raglan for seven years. In the interview, she described growing up on the east coast of the North Island with a family who surfed, and becoming a competitive surfer during her teenage years. Based on my observations of her abilities, and other casual meetings outside of the waves, I approached her in the parking lot at Ngarunui Beach one afternoon and we arranged to meet at my home for the interview. The interview was fluid, engaging and lasted for two hours. She was very articulate on men, women and competitive surfing.

[7] Although I assured my participants of their anonymity, only one participant specifically asked for their identity to be concealed. I decided to use pseudonyms to try and keep that identity hidden more so than the others.

Another female participant, Moana (27), works in various businesses in town. In the interview she revealed she was born in Canada, related highly to snowboard culture and began pursuing surfing four years ago. Moana had been living, working and surfing in Raglan for two years. Although she was able to participate in all surfing spaces in Raglan, she described herself as an intermediate surfer. Previous to this research, I had established a rapport with Moana based on our shared experiences in the water and I felt comfortable recruiting her while surfing. The only difficulty with this interview was the location. We met at her place of work in the small central business district of Raglan. The location could have been arranged differently as we were interrupted twice for 'customer services'.

Each male interviewee was approached separately, one on the street corner of town, the other in the Manu Bay parking lot. I was familiar with both men, one was a friend's husband, and the other I met working in the café two years prior. Originally, I had not anticipated interviewing men for the research, but decided the research would be limited if I did not. I wanted to know 'the boys' views. I invited John (36) and Robert (24) to participate based on factors of skill, their histories as surfers and for their place of origin. John is an American who arrived in New Zealand from the USA two years prior to the interview. He had been surfing for over twenty six years and was very articulate about gender, localism and differences between Raglan and Southern California. John loved experimenting with various types of surfboards. He spent most of him time surfing the points, and described himself as a mellow person in the water. He claimed to surf purely to seek solace and a heightened sense of identity.

Robert was born in Hamilton and spent his life surfing Raglan. He conceded to feeling territorial while surfing Raglan, but like John, saw surfing as an individual escape. Robert loved various board-riding techniques as well and only surfed on locally made boards. He did not grow up in a family of surfers, but had been surfing extensively in New Zealand since he was a child. Robert had lived in Raglan on and off for three years.

Each session was roughly two hours long and followed an open-ended questioning format. I asked many pointed questions pertaining to experiences in the water, feelings and emotions associated with these experiences and the interpretations the surfers may have had pertaining to gender. Many of the interview questions also asked about line-up etiquette and the rules of dropping-in. Although I did not ask questions specifically to discover motivations behind the use of 'the rules', I anticipated that the questioning would broaden my understanding of the appropriate line-up behaviour.

Focus Groups

A total of five women participated in two focus group sessions. Focus group participants were chosen on the basis of preferred surfing location and ability. The first group comprised two women whom I have affectionately termed the Beach Babes. Andrea (29) and Susan (31) are among a small enclave of female surfers who prefer to participate on *Ngarunui Beach* in Raglan. They were beginner surfers and I felt their participation could help highlight the growing diversity of female participation in Raglan's surf culture. Both women had moved to Raglan from overseas, one from the United States, the other from England. Having never surfed before, they were keen to learn and became friends based on their newly developed passion for surfing. I refer to them as the Beach Babes because,

at the time of the group session, they chose only to surf at the beach; neither attempted to surf the points nor was interested in progressing in that direction. They worked locally and had been living, working, and learning to surf in Raglan for a year. At the time of the group session we all worked together at one of the local surf school/ backpacker businesses and I felt comfortable approaching them as candidates for the research. I conducted an informal semi-structured focus group session with open-ended questioning at my home. It was easy and relaxed with conversation ebbing and flowing smoothly as we discussed surfing as if we had been friends for years. They seemed excited about the chance to congregate to discuss surfing; they brought two bottles of wine and baked homemade cookies specifically for the occasion. While my relationship to these women could have affected the outcome of the research questions asked in conversation, I am convinced that my rapport with these women enabled me to acquire more in-depth insights into their surfing experiences. I believe the Beach Babes offer a fascinating perspective on the beginner surf spaces, gender and female companionship.

The second focus group session consisted of three women; Jane (29), Kate (35) and Lisa (33). I refer to this group as the Point Wahine[8] for they each participated at the points and had been surfing for a number of years in Raglan. The criteria for this focus group required all three women to be competent, New Zealand-born surfers, and to possess what I believed would be an extensive knowledge of surf culture in Raglan. I had known Jane since high school and we had learned to surf together six years prior. Jane recruited Kate who fit the research criteria and I rang Lisa via telephone after she was recommended to me by a friend during a conversation on the street.

[8] I refer to this group of women as the 'Point Wahine' because many surfing female friends of mine often refer to themselves as 'Wahine', or 'Wahinewai' when discussing their surfing identities. Wahine is not plural in traditional Te Reo and not plural here.

This focus group session was also held in my home but, for a number of reasons, proved to be more challenging than the first. First, each women was more confident, opinionated and more self-assured of their cultural surroundings and positions in the water. Second, one of the participants seemed to monopolise the conversation and tended to take the discussion on various tangents. At the time of the session, I was concerned that this dominant figure might influence responses to questions about their surfing experiences. Third, I found it hard to play the role of the facilitator at times and in hindsight perhaps I could have been more assertive in the conversation. At many times I felt more of an 'observer' than a participant. However, the strength of the method was revealed as each women prompted questions for the others before I had the chance to. Jane initially said her surfing experiences were not gendered, but became interested by the gender relations which surfaced as the discussion progressed. Such revelations for the focus group participants provided the validity for the focus group as a method of inquiry. In the end, all five women reported a new sense of camaraderie because they enjoyed congregating to discuss their love for surfing. Because the focus group session took place during the winter months, it was nice to recollect and reminisce about summer days and past surfing experiences.

Theoretical Perspective

I will now briefly discuss the theoretical perspective I employed to help me make sense of my data. Adopting a theoretical perspective has both strengths and limitations. While theory can help guide research and explain phenomenon, it also can be limiting when discussion of a particular phenomenon for it can be a simplification of reality. Nonetheless, I found Bourdieu's theories of 'social space' (Jenkins 2002) beneficial here for two reasons. First, his conceptual tools helped make meaning out of my complex data such that I was able to better articulate gender and power positioning. Second, and more simply, his concepts have offered points of conversation throughout this thesis and a chance to debate the value of this theoretical perspective for explaining gendered experiences in various surfing spaces.

Bourdieu's Social Space

Pierre Bourdieu was a French anthropologist and social theorist who devoted time to understanding the dualisms between insider and outsider, researcher and researched, and theory and empirical evidence. He believed structuralism, the predominant theoretical perspective he challenged, did not place enough emphasis on subjectivity (Reed-Danahay 2005). What became important for him, therefore, was to place emphasis on reflexivity to counteract these dichotomies. "Bourdieu advocated a method of 'reflexive sociology' or 'participant observation' in order to balance subjectivity and objectivity in research" (Reed-Danahay 2005: 3). In the 1960s, Bourdieu carried out extensive fieldwork within his native homeland, Bearn, France. He claimed to have uncovered the culture which he "knew without knowing".

For Bourdieu, theory is merely a framework, or tool for thinking about and understanding social realities. His theories of social spaces include the key concepts of habitus, field, capital, and practice which he sees as existing only in relation to one another. The theory and its conceptual tools are useful while examining unequal power relationships between cultural members (Jenkins 2002). Each concept has the potential to generate a greater understanding of how people negotiate, produce and make meaning of their social identities. For this reason, Bourdieu's theories and concepts seemed to be a useful framework to apply my research question pertaining to the gendered experiences in surf culture and the surfing spaces of the line-up. I will now briefly describe Bourdieu's conceptual tools of habitus, field, capital and practice respectively.

Habitus

Habitus is the embodiment of culture. It is a concept Bourdieu utilised while trying to explain how culture is encoded in or on the body. Jenkins (2002) believed Bourdieu's habitus concept is inscribed in three ways. One, the habitus exists in the minds of actors; two, the habitus only exists because of our practices; three, it exists in our 'practical taxonomies' – the anomalies, or the dichotomies such as male/female in our world. For Bourdieu, "the body is a mnemonic device upon and in which the very basics of culture, the practical taxonomies of the habitus, are imprinted and encoded in a socialising or learning process which commences during early childhood" (Jenkins 2002: 76).

In surf culture, habitus would be considered more inscribed on/in the body of a long time surf culture member such as their language, dress, gestures, knowledge of surf

culture (waves and line-up etiquette). Habitus is the way surfing is inscribed on/in a person that reflects the way in which they communicate to members within surf culture. Less advanced surfers, or new initiates, will have less habitus because the simply have not been in the culture for long, therefore, they do not have culture encoded on/in the body. Habitus takes time and is a process of socialisation into a culture such as surfing, which begins in Raglan by participating on the beach with rented surfboards, or by watching surf movies on the couch. Ford and Brown (2006: 123) say that "the practical transmission of surfing knowledge, competency and legitimacy becomes embodied through a repeated practical engagement with the world", which results in the "creation of a form of 'habitus', that is a disposition resulting from a series of practical *conditionings*" (emphasis in original). Such conditions are an engagement with "the rules, knowledges and physical practices of the surfing field" in which are inscribed "into and onto their bodies that begin to define them as surfers" (Ford and Brown 2006: 124). For example, novice surfers may be more concerned with 'how' to dress and function as a surfer, but a surfer with years of experience may be more concerned with their performances in the field. Important in the habitus inscription is how surfers negotiate these expanding cultural identities as surfers and how they negotiate this relationship to Bourdieu's other conceptual tools.

Field

A field is the social space or arena in which actors (people) participate and negotiate their cultural identities. A field is a "social arena within which struggles or manoeuvres take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them" (Jenkins

2002: 84). Fields are defined by what is at stake, or to exercise Bourdieu's economic metaphor, the resources that are at stake in relation to the supply and demand of capital. The field is useful for understanding how actors produce and reproduce their symbolic power in relation to others as "fields are arenas of struggle for 'legitimating', or recognition of the legitimacy of the power associated with a specific form of capital" (Kay and Laberge 2004: 157). "Each field has a different logic and taken-for-granted structure" (Jenkins 2002:85) that guides the agents towards their objective goals, to gain the resources and move up the competitive ladder.

A crucial competent in establishing the field, is to find the field which is dominant for the group in which actors can create, gain and form relationships of power. For example, I have distinguished between the various fields in surf space in Raglan and how surfers produce and reproduce symbolic power relative to others. Such symbolic acts take place in cafés, bars, on the street, in parking lots, on the rocks, on the beach, and in the water. The most predominant field in surf culture, where members negotiate symbolic power, is within the space of the line-up. Here, surfers are able to display their commitment and dedication as cultural members; they build upon their existing capital by juggling social relationships to gain symbolic power and access to waves. It is in the line-up, I would argue, that surfers create, display and reproduce their symbolic power, create capital and reinforce and challenge dominant/subordinate relationships within the surfing field. The less dominant/subordinate distance between two actors, the more likely they are to relate with one another, have access to similar forms of capital, and have strong social bonds within a given field. I believe Bourdieu's ideas surrounding class could be

relevant in surf culture. In surf culture, I understand class to be that of various groups distinguished by ability.

Capital

Capital refers to the various resources that can be drawn on and further developed in a given field. Capital is, metaphorically, "structured internally in terms of power relations and actors' strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvements of their positions with respect to the defining capital" (Jenkins 2002: 85). While Bourdieu mentions various forms of capital, four forms of capital are particularly relevant to this discussion of surf culture. Firstly, he defined economic capital as wealth, and as his conceptual schema is an economic metaphor deciphering what is at stake in the field, I believe economic capital in surf culture is similar to how surfers negotiate the field to access waves. Capital defines what is at stake and what agents can afford. The access to waves is (mostly) understood as the most highly sought after commodity in the water and what surfers spend time manoeuvring in order to acquire. Who gains more accesses, and spends more time on waves in a session, is defined by the social hierarchy. This hierarchy in Raglan is most notably the fraternal 'boys club', the local men who compete professionally or hold the most prestige in honour in the water.

The second form of capital offered by Bourdieu is that of social, or surfer's relationships to others. Such relationships help surfer's access waves, positions in the line-up and establish relationships to others on land. Thirdly, cultural capital is the legitimate knowledge a surfer acquires over time in their cultural surroundings and would include knowledge of wind direction, tides and current, wave size and shape, water

temperature, crowd levels, peak tourism, etc. Lastly, symbolic capital is a surfer's prestige, honour and respect in the water. Symbolic capital is gained (or earned) through dedication, commitment, displays of prowess and risk-taking, and is allocated mainly in Raglan by the predominantly local male figures (judges, professionals, retired professionals, etc).

Of particular importance is how capital is negotiated in the field. Each form of capital helps to define and create the power relationships and is distributed differently in the field. The most highly valued capital in the field would be that of symbolic capital, such as respect, which allows a surfer to access waves successfully without hassle from others. For example, a professional male surfer at Indicators in Raglan will have more opportunities to catch waves because they are able to harness their status in the water and take waves out of turn. Although jumping the queue is considered bad etiquette (and discussed in great detail in Chapter Three), surfers with symbolic capital are simply able to catch more waves. Therefore, capital determines the structures and the hierarchies of surfers in the field.

Bourdieu believes the people of similar classes will have similar access to capital and will also be similar in their habitus, their underlying cultural knowledge of surfing. Moreover, capital is negotiated across classes and this creates boundaries between these classes in the field (Bourdieu 1989). Thus, it will be important to understand how surfers in the field gain access to capital(s) based on their ability level, gendered bodies and group distinctions. These ideas will be discussed in greater length in the following chapters.

Practice

Practice is what people do, it is the action. Bourdieu believed we must locate the source of practice, or social interaction, to understand people's experiences of reality. Bourdieu maintained that people grow up learning the required practices of their social identity because that anything outside of this prescribed normality can create difficulties for a person. In order to manoeuvre through social practices, actors develop a 'feel for the game' by utilising the rules and strategising about practice. Practice is the navigation between the constraints and opportunities in the field and the dispositions of the habitus. Bourdieu argues that social life is accomplished from learning and acquiring a set of practical cultural competences (Bourdieu 1989). On the one hand, Bourdieu claims it is vital to undertake empirical work in order to discover the realities of these lived practices but, on the other, he contemplates whether what people are experiencing is "something other than simply a reflection of 'what is going on in their head'" (Jenkins 2002: 68). In other words, Bourdieu believes social practice is not consciously organised or orchestrated by intention, but can be merely a difference between the process of socialisation and the conscious decision to do things. Social actors learn how to manoeuvre their way through the game, but they do so without knowing why, as he claims actors are "largely incapable" of perceiving their social reality as anything other than "the way things are" (Bourdieu 1989: 17). Bourdieu suggests that actors learn to manipulate the field, as practice is fluid and flexible, and that actors can have an "illusion of an immediate understanding of [their] social reality" (Jenkins 2002: 69). Bourdieu believes it is impossible to have a rule for every social encounter and that actors learn a set of acquired skills through the habitus to negotiate their cultural surroundings and

strategise in order to function with more ease (Taylor 1999). Although it is debatable as to whether acquiring skills to negotiate space successfully is a conscious decision on the part of actors or not, based on my observations in the surfing field, I would dispute this argument. As I will illustrate in the forthcoming chapters, as surfers negotiate the positions in the field, it appears as though they are learning a set of skill and knowledges favourably utilised to gain access to various forms of capital in the field. Thus, surfers are essentially using their conscious thought to proceed forward and change their set of circumstances. Therefore, I would argue here and in again in more detail in Chapter Six, that Bourdieu's lack of attention to actors' conscious decisions to 'do things' is a limitation to his research and does not allow for social change (Bouveresse 1999, Jenkins 2002, Taylor 1999).

Summary

To quickly recap on the above, the habitus is describe as the socially constructed world in or on the body and, according to Bourdieu, is unconsciously orchestrated based on our unconscious cultural socialisation. The field is the playing space or ground for the social group while capital(s) are resources social actors possess and can be drawn upon to negotiate power within the field. The ability to obtain capital in the field helps to establish a member's place in surfing spaces such as the line-up and to acquire knowledge in surf culture, the relationships between surfers, and surfers' honour and prestige. Bourdieu's concept of practice refers to action or individual behaviour.

The use of Bourdieu's concepts in the following chapters will help to clarify how members of the Raglan surf culture negotiate their cultural surroundings. More

specifically, drawing on Bourdieu's conceptual scheme, I explain how surfers negotiate space for themselves within the surfing 'field' via various 'practices' which help them accumulate 'capital' and thus access to the most precious commodity of all – the waves. The strengths and limitations of Bourdieu's theoretical tools will be discussed in greater length in Chapter Six. In the following chapter, however, I will combine my research methods, the theoretical tools discussed above and the cumulative data in order to describe the predominant field in the surfing spaces of Raglan, the line-up.

Chapter Three: Surfing Spaces

This chapter draws attention to the surfing spaces (the already established 'fields') of Raglan with particular reference to the space of the *line-up* - a systematic way surfers queue for waves. It will be divided into two parts based on my two insights as a participant observer. First, as my research progressed it became clear to me that the line-up was the predominant field for negotiating capital in surf culture. The first section is therefore devoted to the line-up phenomenon. The second section discusses the rules that apply to this important space. I discovered a sign-post at Whale Bay depicting the very basic set of surfing rules and this became a pivotal point in my research. In this chapter, I extrapolate on the rules depicted in sign and how they guide the surfing experience in the act of lining up. It is important to unravel the set of surfing rules because it "must be that somewhere in our mind, consciously or unconsciously, a premise has been laid down about how [they should be] follow[ed]" (Taylor 1999: 29). How the rules supposedly guide surfer's experiences in the field is of particular importance, for I would argue that the knowledge of these rules helps surfers accumulate positions of power on the waves.

The Wave Space

The object of surfing is simple; catch a wave and ride it to the best of one's ability. Waves are thus a limited commodity and surfers are in competition to access them. In this way, surfers are competing for a scarce resource that is the waves which could be analysed similar to Bourdieu's concept of economic capital. What is important at this stage is to recognise how each surfing sessions evolves differently in Raglan's surfing spaces. These locations include Ngarunui Beach, Manu Bay, Whale Bay and

Indicators[9]. These four locations could be viewed as a continuum of surfing difficulty starting at Ngarunui and finishing with Indicators[10]. Each of these locations has certain qualities that result in difficult surfing experiences. These qualities are the environmental conditions such as typical wave size, wave shape, and contours of the ocean's floor (from sand to rock). Knowledge of these four locations and their unique qualities are all aspects within the rich surfing culture of Raglan. The inherent behaviours that manifest in these spaces could be examined based on crowd levels and different levels of social intimidation based on the localism in the water. For example, Ngarunui Beach may be considered the best place for learning to surf (sandy bottom and range of breaking waves as a result) while Indicators would be considered more for its difficult wave shape and local pecking orders (a unidirectional point break and limited access to wave time).

The point breaks are very mechanical because the permanent rocky shoreline creates more predictable waves, with a crowd often constituting high numbers of tourists. Manu Bay would be the most popular of the three point breaks in Raglan because of tourism. Many locals claim Whale Bay is generally a fatter and slower peeling wave compared to that of Indicators. Of the three points, Indicators can be viewed as the most challenging because waves peel faster, are generally bigger in size, and take place in a space that is densely populated by local surfers. In this way, Indicators point break is more intensified by localism – territorial for waves. Accumulated time spent in the water at each surfing spot will help a surfer to recognise the conditions there and, more specifically, to understand how the line-up generally is enacted in each space. For now, it would be beneficial to focus on the surfing spaces of Manu Bay.

[9] These four surfing locations would be considered the most popular in Raglan, though there are others, surf breaks in the Raglan are depend on the tidal conditions to break, and therefore they are less consistent.
[10] Please refer again to Photograph B as it depicts this continuum on page 37.

Approaching Space

Manu Bay is internationally recognised for its famous left hand point break. Surfers travel not only domestically, but also internationally, to enjoy this point break because it is often occupied by the wide spectrum of surfing ability from pro to absolute beginner. Manu Bay[11] features numerous spaces in which interactions among surfers occur. Such spaces include the car parks, the rocks, as a well as the line-up, and help display and communicate surfing identities. Because of the close proximity to the car park, surfers, friends, family, visitors, commentators, competition judges, and anyone else interested in observing or participating in surfing can stand, sit, lie or paddle around Manu Bay and observe surfers in action in the field. The car park provides excellent viewing of the surf break and serves as a localised space where surfers set up barbeques on Saturday afternoons, local fun competitions are held occasionally for the Point Boardriders Club, and spectators just set up camp to hang out and watch for a few hours or the day. Tour vans, trucks, fishing boats, motorbikes, kids on bicycles and foot traffic congregate in one space to witness and be a part of surf culture. But it does not stop here; the spaces of the car park only offer the access space to the more important space for surfers at Manu Bay.

The car park extends down to a rocky shoreline where people gather their shellfish, kids jump from rock to rock, and spectators cheer for their favourite surfers demonstrating various surfing manoeuvres. Most importantly, surfers access the waves from this rocky shoreline. Surfers scramble across the rocks to get to the water and many cultural messages are generated as surfers communicate in non-verbal ways. For example, how a surfer enters the water at Manu Bay is of particular importance as a

[11] Please refer to Photograph C for a picture of Manu Bay, page 38.

Photograph C: *Manu Bay, June 2006.* This picture depicts Manu Bay breaking on a low tide with a good sized swell the line-up is adjacent to where the waves are breaking. The *rocks, the car park, the boat ramp* are also visible. This surfing space shows how onlookers are able to watch surfers as even those who do not participate as surfers can join in surfing spaces.

surfer may jump from *jump rock*- the distant boulder field. Such a jump communicates knowledge, skill and social status because it is an intimidating way to access the waves compared to walking into the water at the boat ramp. Therefore, when a surfer paddles out to the line-up they have already conveyed significant cultural knowledge and capital just by the way they enter the water.

Line-Up Space

As a surfer paddles away from the rocks and into the line-up, the social space is further enacted or negotiated. Surfers cluster in formations that exist in relation to the invisible features lurking beneath the ocean's surface. It is as though these features shape the waves, shape the pecking order, and shape the experiences of surfers waiting to catch a wave. But it is not just the manifest physical conditions that determine the shape of the pecking order, as I will explain, the social interactions around them also plays an important role in shaping how surfers experience the environment in which they are embedded? An age old debate resurfaces. The debate centres on what is shaping surfers' behaviour: the physical environment or the social interaction? At Manu Bay, there are recognisable patterns in surf behaviour which are likely due to both the interaction of the physical environment and social interaction. It is the line-up space where surfers create, maintain, produce, and reproduce their cultural identities through social interaction.

Bourdieu in the Line-Up

In the line-up, a surfer has many choices on how they seek access to waves. To recall chapter two's discussion of Bourdieu's tool for analysing social spaces, the line up would

be the "'field of struggles' in which [actor's] strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field" (Jenkins 2002: 85). Broadly speaking, surfers seek access to the waves. The defining capital of the field in this study can be examined through Bourdieu's four concepts of culture; economic capital (wave time), social capital (social relationships to other surfers), cultural capital (knowledge of the physical and cultural surroundings) and symbolic capital (prestige, honour and respect in the water). A surfer's positioning in the pecking order of the line-up is directly related to their capital, or power. "Agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital" (Bourdieu 1989: 17). What Bourdieu highlights is that the various forms of capital are present at any given moment and are utilised to climb higher in the social pecking order and access waves. For example, the amount of symbolic capital surfers possess is directly related to their cultural, social and economic capital. In other words, if a surfer has extensive knowledge in the line-up and has status as a local surfer (social) that will enable them to access more wave time (economic) which in turn generates prestige and honour (symbolic) in the line-up. Put a different way, if a surfer already has established relationships with other local surfers, they have the ability to acquire and thus transfer capital into other forms of capital differently as compared to a beginner surfer. If surfers exhibit high ability levels while performing on waves, they convey their cultural capital as "insider prestige and status are overwhelmingly functions of skill"; therefore, "cultural capital in surfing is [also referred to] as 'performance capital'" (Ford and Brown 2006:

77) mostly valued within the kinds of competition that lie outside of this research. For example, professional surfing athletes hold great amounts of performance capital as they are able to turn their symbolic and social capital into accessing wave time in the line-up more than other surfers around them. Performance capital "is assessed by other surfers more subjectively in the terms of the combination of manoeuvres, style, [and] capability in big waves" (Ford and Brown 2006: 77). What becomes important to understand as a surfer navigates through social encounters, is how power is allocated in the field. As mentioned already, capital is distributed between cultural members through, by, and because of one another.

Bourdieu's conceptual tools help reveal dominant and subordinate positions of social actors (or surfers) and help to determine what is at stake in the field. These tools were analysed in relation to the line-up and the ways in which surfers negotiated surfing spaces. The various forms of capital in the field help to establish what is at stake throughout any given session. If a surfer with great performance capital has more economic capital than another, struggles emerge for those considered lower in the power positions for waves. As a result, surfers utilise their cultural capital to negotiate the line-up space by applying, and in turn reapplying the rules of surfing.

Negotiated Space: The Rules

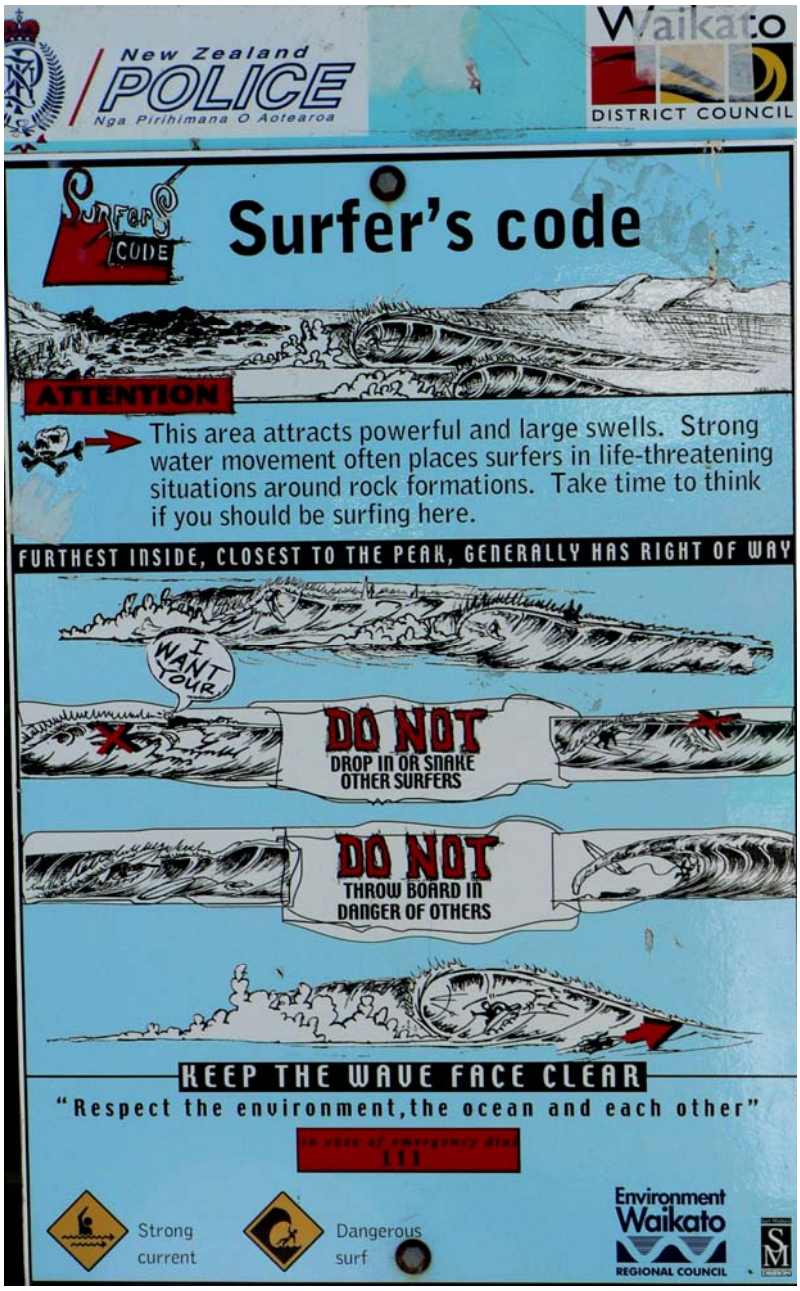
The concept of rules for any social setting seems almost too cumbersome to imagine. We may think we know the rules that guide us through our everyday experiences, but if asked to sit down and write them out, where would we begin? They are often implicit and, if Bourdieu is to be believed, we do not know what we know.

Furthermore, even if we knew them, how would we categorically begin to express what they mean, how they work, and what exactly they do? What I have come to realise is that no matter how long you analyse or try to distinguish rules in the social spaces of surfing, a complete set may not be determined. Bourdieu was particularly sensitive to two very different uses of the word 'rule'. While one refers to the rules as "an explanatory hypothesis formulated by the theorist" in order to explain what one sees, the other refers to the rule "as the principle which really govern[s] the practice of [the actors] concerned" (Bouveresse 1999: 45). It is here that Bourdieu begins to make sense of rules by stating, that actors do not practise in terms of rules, but in terms of strategies. Such strategies could also be analysed as that of the habitus for our strategies are internally encoded in and on the body; we know them without knowing (Bouveresse 1999).

The sign-post in question was the catalyst in directing my thoughts towards the 'game' of surfing and the 'rules' that supposedly guide the experience. Ultimately, the rules could be analysed as mere strategies for manipulating others in the field, but this will be discussed further below. The 'rules' of the surfing are depicted in the Surfer's Code[12] and will be addressed individually below. Other surfing spots around the world have similar signs depicting the rules but with small variations[13]. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I will focus on the rules which regulate 'practices' in the surfing 'fields'.

This sign stands at the gateway to the two surfing spots of Whale Bay and Indicators[14]. As discussed, these are advanced surfing spaces utilised primarily (but not exclusively) by long term surf members, and/or locals living in the Raglan area.

[12] Please refer to Photograph D on page 43.
[13] For more information on surfing rules see Clifton Ever (2004) *Men Who Surf*, or Nat Young (2003) *Surf Rage: Turning Negatives into Positives.*
[14] See Photograph E on page 44.



Photograph D: *The Surfer's Code.* This photograph is a picture of a sign-post at Whale Bay. It could be viewed as the gateway to Whale Bay and Indicators.

Photograph E: *Te Whaanga.* Te Whaanga is also known as ‘The Bay’, the small residential community eight kilometres west of Raglan’s main centre. The Whale Bay Point break appears in the foreground and, surprisingly, is not occupied by surfers. The Indicators point break appears in the background.

The posted warning insists that this shoreline is dangerous based on swell sizes, water movement, and the rocky obstacles. In all fairness, this location often shows conditions of a life-threatening nature so it is important to warn people who are not otherwise aware. Yet, when the reader is reminded to "take time to think if you should be surfing here"; one may wonder if this has more to do with the environmental conditions, or the need for the locals to protect this space from visitors[15]. It is worth noting this sign is written only in English, yet has a pictorial quality that non-English speaking surfers might understand, even if only in humour. The sign was erected by Environment Waikato as illustrated in the Navigational Safety Bylaws[16] introduced to all navigable waterways in the Waikato region in hopes of ensuring safety and to prevent conflict between the various user activities. These safety bylaws reference the power dynamics displayed between surf lifesavers and surfers on the beach space in Raglan.[17]

These four, possibly five, basic surfing rules depicted in the photograph can be considered universal in the global surfing culture. I mention five rules based on a concept the concept of respect which is inherent in the information provided on the sign. In surf culture, respect should manifest, in turn-taking, respect for others in the water, and for the ocean's immediate environment. Since the weighting of the rules changes from session to session with the diversity of people, level of ability, location, and the environmental conditions, pinpointing moments when the rules are not being carried out according to the

[15] Another sign stands in the Whale Bay area. This sign stand on Maori tribal land belonging to the Ngati Koata (and extended others), marking the boundary for the privately owned land. In order for surfers to access the Indicators point break, they must pass this sign and walk across the rocks which warns them to "mean to high tide". The Ngati Koata family wishes surfers (and others) to respect the space which they hold so sacred. Although this sign sparks a world of debate with the socio-historical and socio-cultural it implies, it is beyond the scope if this thesis to discuss it further here.
[16] The bylaw for Raglan's Navigational Bylaw appears in Schedule 1.6. 2003.
[17] See Pearson (1979) and/or Booth (2004) for the emerging of conflict between lifesavers and surfers on New Zealand and Australian beaches as early as the late 1800's.

sign proves difficult. Each rule has multiple dimensions; the first dimension is a duality between the rule as a concept and the acceptations to the rule; the second dimension pertains to how the rules may be manipulated as surfers strategise and break them. Each rule will be addressed with examples of how they are practiced and, more importantly, policed.

'The Surfer's Code'

1. Furthest inside, closest to the peak, generally has right of way. Taking turns to catch a wave indicates the basic etiquette when lining up to catch a wave[18]. Turn-taking, however, is not always practised in acceptable ways. Since some surfers are so well versed in recognising how to take advantage of the opportunities that arise, they can take these opportunities out of context and use them in less appropriate ways. One example, of which I have witnesses on numerous occasions during my participant observation session, is when two surfers are paddling side by side. The surfer second in line subtly positions him or herself close to the first surfer in line preventing him or her from catching the wave. This enables the second surfer to catch the wave and 'inadvertently' jump the queue. Jumping the queue or manipulating the line-up to catch a wave out of turn is commonly referred to as *snaking*. Yet, in surf culture jumping the queue can also be very positive and advantageous and considered appropriate if it is carried out correctly, and more importantly, by the 'right' people, that is, those with performance or social capital. 'Snaking' becomes a skill that surfers master in order to catch more waves as they negotiate their way throughout the session. Untimely, as surfers build upon their cultural capital in the field, they build a knowledge base on how to 'read' others in the

[18] See Photograph F on page 47

Photograph F: *Going Right:* This is a picture of the Ngarunui beach line-up as surfers queue to go right. 'Going right' in Raglan is somewhat of a novelty as surfers typically queue to go left at the points. In this photo, only men are participating in this cultural setting. The queue appears almost visible. Anzac Day, 2008.

water. 'Reading' other surfers behaviour as they navigate throughout a session is another acquired skill enabling attentive surfers more access to waves. Surfers with performance and symbolic capital will be able to read other surfer's ability levels based on the non-verbal communication running throughout the field. For example, if a surfer paddles erratically out to the line-up and struggle to sit on their board, other surfers around them will assume that he or she is a novice and may exclude them from the session. Further, novice surfers will likely loose turns to catch waves, or be continually dropped in on, as it is a fine art in understanding how surfers produce, maintain and monitor their social positions in the line-up.

2. Do not drop in or snake other surfers. This rule is specifically related to the first rule in that, if a surfer jumps the queue, they claim priority and essentially drop-in[19]. This rule appears basic and simple yet it causes the most angst, frustration and upset of all the rules. It happens in one of the most critical moments of surfing, *the take off*. To catch a wave in its breaking point, stand up, and drop down takes balance, skill and knowledge of one's ability and the wave conditions may include factors associated with fear, courage, and stamina. Surfers who jump the queue and drop-in may potentially create problems resulting in collisions and, damage to boards, or cause the wave to prematurely break in front of the surfer first in line. If a wave prematurely breaks, the waves face crumbles and can ruin the surfer's chance to access the face of the wave. Moreover, if a surfer is snaked because another drops-in on them, they do not receive a turn and will have to paddle to the back of the queue. Snaking often results in anger and develops into verbal and physical abuse, and changes the experience for others in the water. During any given session, and especially if it is crowded, there will be a handful of

[19] See Photograph G on page 49.

Photograph G: *The Drop-In.* These three surfers are in the line-up at Manu Bay. The surfer who appears to the left in the photograph has the right of way as he is positioned closest to where the wave is breaking. The surfer furthest to the right in the photograph is dropping-in while the surfer in the middle chose to *pull-off* the wave and wait their turn.

surfers dropping-in on others. A surfer who is known as a notorious 'snake' may begin to experience retaliation by the other surfers, and especially by the ones they continuously dropped-in on. However, "the consensus of the 'drop-in rule' generally serves to benefit the more skilful surfers and those with especial local knowledge of the breaking characteristics of a given break" (Ford and Brown 2006:79). In other words, those with considerable performance and social capital are able to bend the rule, which in turn, helps to build upon their existing capital and positions in the line-up. However, it is not always understood by cultural members and can be the cause of great distress to surfers. An example of such distress was explained to me by a female surfing companion of mine. Her eyes swelled while she recollected a six-foot swell where a man took her leash off and pushed her board away. She was accused by this man of dropping-in and, although she and others state she had the right of way, she was left stranded on the Raglan Bar[20] without her surfboard.

3. Do not throw board in danger of others [sic]**.** Always hold on to your board. This rule is extremely important in that a free moving surfboard can be a hazardous object and potentially a weapon. Unaware beginners often do not hold onto their boards because they lack strength, they fear the weight of the surfboard, or they doubt their ability to *duck-dive* successfully. Surfboards can be hard to manoeuvre in the water as it takes time to learn to duck-dive a board successfully. Because of this buoyancy, beginners often abandon their boards in a last minute safety attempt. Because most surfing "takes place in small to medium sized waves", which is the case in Raglan, "the

[20] The Raglan Bar is outsider of Raglan's harbor mouth and often holds good sized swell. In order to access this spot, a surfer must either travel by boat, or paddle the seven hundred meters (tide depending) from the beach out to sea.

main danger of risk is being hit by another user's waveriding equipment" (Ford and Brown 2006: 80).

4. Keep the wave face clear. This rule is important for it helps to ensure a surfer's wave riding experience. Riding a wave can prove difficult as others paddling can get in the way. Therefore, it is courteous to paddle away from the breaking point of the wave and towards the white-water. This gives the wave rider more room and helps to improve a surfer's experience on the wave. Unsuccessful attempts to paddle out of the way may cause collisions and, damage to boards and bodies. More so, if one waits for a turn and this turn is compromised, they may potentially be disappointed by having to paddle to the back of the line. Riding the wave is the epiphany of the surfing experience, and if this is jeopardised in any way, people can become angry, occasionally resulting in surf violence and rage (Young 2003). Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear of a surfboard intending to be used as a weapon and causing great harm to another. An example happened earlier this year when a local male was dropped-in on by a younger surfer (who was later reported to be a non-local). The local man was so agitated by this that he verbally confronted the outsider by exchanging harsh words. When the visitor declined his invitation to 'take it to the beach', the local decided he had enough and paddled away. The visitor then shoved the nose of his board in the direction of the local and deeply penetrated the lower leg. This wound was in need of attention and left the local man out of commission for over a week. This was a deliberate attempt to cause bodily harm to another with a surfboard, and is one reason for this rule's presence on the sign.

Knowledge of these rules comes with time as they are complicated, informal, mainly learned through trial and error, and hard to establish from one moment to the next. Yet, as surfers cultural, symbolic and performance capital increases, as does their hiatus, they learn to manoeuvre successfully in the field and access more wave-time. And, although the rules are subject to interpretation, and cause confusion, time and experience builds up the cultural knowledge necessary to navigate in such spaces. Since surfers are competing for a resource that only arrives at lengthy intervals and in short bursts, a surfer must learn to negotiate surfing if they are going to take part in an extended session. Despite the visibility of the rules upon accessing the waves, surfing rarely unfolds as systematically as the rules insist. Moreover, my observations and experiences revel that it is the 'breaking' of the surfing rules which essentially govern how surfing sessions are negotiated.

Renegotiating Space: Breaking the Rules

According to Bourdieu, we are guided (without knowing) by our cultural unconscious, therefore we may not realise how we manipulate social spaces. We have learned a set of acquired practices that allow us to manoeuvre throughout these social spaces time and time again. Because of this, we learn strategies that will enable us to move more freely and advantageously. In relation to surfing spaces, surfers develop a 'feel for the game' with time spent in the field, and by acquiring cultural capital which evidently is governed by the negotiation of rules. Negotiating these rules is learned early by surfers through various mediums such as surf instructors, magazines, friends, movies, but mainly it is learned through the act of participation. I would argue that surfers continually learn to

renegotiate these rules and eventually learn how to break rules in order to gain more advantages. Such advantages will be discussed below.

The object of surfing could be analysed as less focused on catching waves and more on renegotiating the line-up space by taking advantage of other surfer's social positioning. Bourdieu believes we must locate the source of practice, or social interaction, to understand people's experiences of reality. Because people grow up learning the required practices of their social identity, anything outside of this prescribed normality can become a struggle. In order to manoeuvre through social practices, agents develop a feel for the game by utilising the rules and strategies. Bourdieu argues that social life is accomplished from learning, teaching and "acquiring a set of practical cultural competences" (Jenkins 2002: 70), in other words, a feel for the game. "In the social game, a certain number of regular patterns of behaviour are the direct result of will to conform to codified, recognised rules. In this case the regularity is the product of the rule, and the obedience to the rule is an intentional act, which implies knowledge and comprehension of what the rule says of the case in question" (Bouveresse 1999: 49). However, not all actors participate in accordance to the rule concept as they learn consciously or unconsciously how to manipulate space and take advantage of others which "includes the social and cultural institutions that establish their own hierarchies of success" (Ford and Brown 2006:77). The rules therefore, could be analysed as strategies for manipulating others in the field because it "is only in interaction that things social are manipulated" (Moerman 1988: 2). Rule following is a culturally specific concept and it is no wonder that "when the misunderstanding stems from a difference of background" what needs to be articulated is the surfers' understanding of a phenomenon "which may

never have been articulated before" (Taylor 1999: 31). Nevertheless, surfers inadvertently exclude others in order to receive various forms of capital, especially their version of economic capital. Yet, the act of manipulation causes dismay to others as some surfers assume more dominant roles in the line-up. This dominant/subordinate dance between surfers becomes a relationship of power between cultural members in the line-up.

For example, as the stakes are raised in the line-up space with increased crowd levels, the local/visitor ratios, the standard of surfing, the size and frequency of waves, and so forth, a surfer's best chance to catch a wave and progress in the local pecking order, is to learn to recognise specific behavioural patterns (who are the novice surfers, who are the dominant, who is monopolising wave time and how). Recognising behavioural patterns of participants enables one to manipulate the social space by taking advantage of opportunities that might arise. Such opportunities would help a surfer take a wave out of turn, gain access to positions further along in the line, and take advantage of less able or knowledgeable surfers. Exclusion may be based on factors such as ability level (high versus low skill), nationality/residency (local versus visitor), gender (male versus female), age (older versus younger), and/or equipment (*shortboard* versus *longboard*). While the former (e.g. high skill, local, New Zealander, male shortboarder) tend to give a participant a certain amount of capital and thus access, these factors are repeatedly blurred. For example, a local female with high shortboarding surfing skills will typically have more access than an older, intermediate long-boarder with low ability. Other examples of rule manipulation and exclusion include: when an elite surfer is given preference in the line-up, or it is acceptable for them to drop-in; when a local takes precedence over visiting others and drops-in with little consequence; when a male

paddles up the inside of a women and then takes her turn. Drawing upon Bourdieu's conceptual tools, if a surfer does not have the cultural knowledge and abilities to negotiate within the field then surfers with more performance, symbolic or social capital will snake them when trying to access waves. Therefore, the surfers with more capital, and therefore more power, will take advantage of the weaker surfer and climb higher in the pecking order by blocking their access and excluding them from the session.

Marginalisation for group membership does not have to be experienced always as negative. Some surfers I spoke with reported experiencing their membership as inclusive. While this will be discussed to a greater length in Chapter Five, here I want to highlight how surfing can be inclusive and a positive mechanism for group cohesion. Or example, similarities in gender, ability, local status (or outsider status), preferred boar-riding style and other such factors create unity for members as groups are bound by their commonalties. The most important group for helping to define the social hierarchy in the line-up is what is referred to as 'the pack'. In Raglan, the pack mostly consists of the able and/or local surfers in the sessions that are predominantly male. These surfers are all able to compete for the access to resources (the waves) based on their ability or their acceptance as a cultural member. If an outsider were to try and join the queue, the pack may paddle closer to each other becoming a smaller and tighter group making it hard for the newcomer to break through and get a chance at first in line. This pack creates a stronger hold for the position of first in line and will tighten regardless of the newcomer's ability. The newcomer's ability has not yet been proven and he or she will have to wait for an opportune moment in order to catch a wave. This will most likely arise if a member of this pack misses a turn, or falls off the wave. The newcomer may be expected

to exhibit their respect for the territory through displays of patience before they are able to have a spot in the line-up. Therefore, the pack's unifying mechanism in this instance can be viewed as inclusive and a cohesive mechanism for group members, while simultaneously excluding and marginalising outsiders. Bourdieu (1989: 16) observes how "people who are close together in social space [tend] to find themselves, by choice or by necessity, close to one another in geographical space", yet groups of people nonetheless "encounter one another and interact, if only briefly and intermittently" while they negotiate the same spaces. Bourdieu highlights how actors manage perceptions, experiences and positions in relation to one another. In surf culture, surfers juggle the contradictory nature of the social space by simultaneously taking part in an experience that extends relationships as both inclusive and exclusive making the space in which they occupy a site of constant struggle and a space of great resistance.

Summary

This chapter has drawn attention to the surfing spaces of Raglan with particular reference to the surfing line-up, which I have demonstrated, is the predominant space in which surfers negotiate capital and struggle with positions of power. Social actors juggle various forms of capital to understand their own self worth and make sense of their social realities as they are living and acting within them (Bourdieu 1989). This chapter was also a chance to unravel the phenomenon of the line-up by focusing specifically on the rules. These rules were depicted on a sign-post located in the Raglan surf culture community which helped in revealing how the rules are utilised to establish hierarchies, access power and, manipulate and exclude surfers in the field. The most important point to highlight at

this stage in the research is how surfers gain access to waves by taking advantage of others signalling their positions of power in the line-up, their cultural capital, and how the rules are reinforced by some and broken by others. This complexity in the social interaction between cultural members is also simple when understanding that surfers typically have one main objective, to catch waves and ride them. Chapter Four will examine how the male interviewees in my research negotiated their masculinity in the surfing spaces of the line-up in Raglan.

Chapter Four: Men's Experiences in the Line-Up

According to Booth (2000), surf culture is based on a male valuation system and thereby men "serve as the implicit subject around [whom] all knowledge is constructed" (Ford and Brown 2006: 84). In surf culture, men are said to hold a degree of priority that is justified "through a combination of social position, physical prowess and cultural connections" (Ford and Brown 2006: 94) or, in other words, access to social, performance and cultural capital. One scholar described masculinity within surfing as negotiating understandings through "shared experiences, to witness heroic achievements, and as an audience that transforms physical capital into social prestige (respect) to help negotiate conventional understandings of masculinity within the surfing hierarchy" (Waitt 2008: 82). Though men often take centre stage, some women (particularly highly skilled participants) in surfing spaces challenge men as the surfing gender-relation continually shifts and surfers construct and sustain their gendered identities (Ford and Brown 2006). In their discussion of the gender order of surfing, Ford and Brown (2006: 87) explain that "some expressions of masculinity (e.g. strength, assertiveness, courage) and femininity (e.g. grace, deference, passivity)" are given more symbolic value than others. Continuing, they explain that the dominant masculine ideology that is constructed in the surfing space "serves as the invisible core of this gender order". I place this chapter before that of women's experiences for precisely this reason, because it is apparent in Raglan that 'men-who-surf' help to negotiate a cultural understanding for the consumption of this social space.

In this chapter, I illustrate how male interviewees negotiate and experience their masculine identities as fluid and multidimensional. In turn, these men facilitate an

understanding of surf culture as negotiated through discourse and practice in the Raglan community. Firstly, I will discuss how men negotiate the line-up (the already established field) by exploring topics associated with localism, aggression, nationality, board-riding equipment and gender. These topics subtly reveal how social positioning (social capital) and status (symbolic capital) are constructed and maintained in the line-up with respect to how the men distribute different forms of capital. Importantly, as the men practise in the field, they disclose how they construct their social capital and sometimes justify exclusionary behaviour of other surfers who may be "different" (e.g. a non-local, women). The second section examines how the men express their experiences and interpretations of women in the surfing spaces of the line-up. Each section discusses the inherent contradictions these men experience in the water and ultimately, how their experiences illustrate the line-up as a very male space.

Men in the Line-Up

As surfers differ based on their social, cultural and symbolic capital, it is no wonder tensions rise between various members of surf culture. As crowd levels increase in the Raglan surf space, local surfer's behaviours become more territorial and surfers are excluded and marginalised based on their 'other' surfing identities. Such exclusion is often related to factors associated with ability, nationality, ethnicity, age, class and/or gender. One way in which this exclusion manifests is known as localism. Localism in Raglan is articulated by my two male interviewees below.

John (aged 36) and Robert (24) have grown up surrounded by, and immersed in, surf culture, therefore, these men possess an extensive amount of cultural knowledge.

Since they have forty-three years of surfing experience between them, it could be argued that they hold a greater amount of cultural capital in the line-up compared to less experienced surfers. The difference between these two men, however, is that their surfing knowledge originated from different parts of the world. Because they differ in their point of origin, they differ in the status in the Raglan line-up. As noted earlier, John had arrived from the USA two years prior, and although he had twenty-six years plus of surfing experience in California, he has less symbolic capital than Robert who might be considered a Raglan 'local'. In some surfing spaces, John might be considered a 'blow-in'. In contrast, Robert grew up in the nearby city of Hamilton, spent his life surfing the Raglan waters, and expressed a sense of entitlement to this surfing space. Such a local/non-local distinction between John and Robert is a classic example of tension between two cultural members trying to negotiate capital in the field and especially access waves. Although both competent surfers, the experiences of John and Robert differ based on nationality and localism, thus allowing exploration of how capital is negotiated in the field.

Localism in the Line-Up

The dimensions of nationality and localism are seen in the following comment expressed by Robert:

> You live in a place and you consider yourself to be a part of it, thick and thin. You are there when there are bad days and you surf all year round. Then when it's really, really good, and all of a sudden there are a hundred guys there and you think, "Where were you when it was bad and we were surfing it? Paying your dues? Why all of a sudden do you come and expect to surf? I have been waiting for this good day all year, or ten years, or however long I have lived in this place". It's a good day and all of a sudden there are fifty people I have never seen before

> in my life trying to catch waves. I guess for some reason I feel like I have more rights or I am more entitled then they are, I don't know. Surfing with less people is just more enjoyable than surfing with lots of people, so when there are lots of people in the water, I guess I feel like I want to protect it. "Go away! Go back to where you came from because it is more fun without you!"

Robert expresses the territoriality that local surfers develop in their favourite local surf breaks. This territoriality gets expressed through verbal and physical violence when the waves are *pumping* in local spots. Ford and Brown (2006: 80) argue that experienced surfers only facilitate participation in the line-up "to local surfers whom they imbued with performance capital". As discussed in Chapter Three, performance capital is similar in the way cultural capital is obtained and established in the field. As suggested, the line-up is shared only with those seen as having similar prestige and status: "[T]hose whom they termed 'weekenders' and non-locals… were perceived as having little or no performance capital and labelled, (internationally) in surfing argot, as 'kooks' and 'gremmies'" (Ford and Brown 2006: 80). Such international surfing argot is analogous to Raglan when words such as *blow-in*, *kook*, and sometimes that of *grommet* (replacing the e in gremmies for an o) are used to stigmatise others. As experienced by John, this labelling occurs even when non-locals displayed physical prowess and commitment. It becomes clear that non-locals surfing in Raglan are constrained in their capital accumulating abilities.

John expresses the non-local's views and, while he has experienced marginalisation based on his outsider status, he suggests that behaviour of fellow surfers in crowded Raglan waters was much more polite and non-violent when compared to Southern California. He had experienced more rage in the waters of Santa Cruz.

However, it could be that this lesser rage was due to the fact that he acknowledged himself as an outsider when in Raglan; he specifically respected the need to abide by the local protocol.

> I just wish there was more harmony out in the water, but I'm American and they're Kiwi and that's were the friction begins. Yet, coming down [to New Zealand] has definitely breathed a new light into my surfing. It is very rarely too crowded for me, and people for the most part, are friendly. At least they are friendlier than Santa Cruise so, I rarely have a bad experience. I am like the mellowest guy out in the water and I am totally respectful and courteous. I know what the protocol is and everything, but guys are still aggressive towards me and things can get heated.

John has access to the waves and the ability to negotiate social, cultural and symbolic capital. Interestingly, Robert discussed territoriality further. "It's just territorial its not ownership. Obviously no one thinks they own the sea or the waves". This appears contradictory to John's experiences which point towards local surfers as territorial for the waves. Although John knew he was a non-local, he believed that by practising in a "mellow" manner, surfing sessions would unfold more positively and he could access waves with less hassle. John's non-local characteristic seems to have put him in a different class and he had less symbolic capital than other, more local male surfers.

Even though Robert and John came from different cultural backgrounds, they were bound by their gender when in the line-up. Further, they both fit the surfing stereotype as middle class, white, English-speaking, heterosexual men who may be able to hold dominant positions in the line-up by virtue of these characteristics. Surfers not fitting this stereotype may be marginalised in relation to them. At this point it must be said that 'other' New Zealand male surfers, particularly those of Maori or Pacific Island

decent, can claim significant symbolic capital in surf culture. In Raglan specifically, there are a number of predominant Maori surfers who carry high symbolic and performance capital in the local surfing community, and thus have considerable access to the line-up. Yet, "these groups are nevertheless always slightly marginalised due to their social position as (at least slightly) 'other'" (Ford and Brown 2006: 92). This is further complicated by the fact that Maori men may have more cultural, social and symbolic capital, and therefore, 'local' status in the wider Raglan community when not in the water. However, Maori male surfers in Aotearoa do not fit within the 'dominant' stereotype because the white males around them construct "a [ethnic] power bloc thereby reinforcing the [ethnic] order" (Ford and Brown 2006: 92). Perhaps future research could look more deeply into the 'other' New Zealand male surfing bodies to ascertain their surfing experiences as ethnic minorities.

Surfers' ethnic, national, residential and gendered bodies points towards the ever growing diversity of surf culture in Raglan. The local/non-local distinction may forever pose a constraint for surfers in the Raglan line-up and also create a cultural distinction that could be considered a gender-neutral characteristic in surf culture. One characteristic more closely associated with traditional notions of masculinity is that of aggression.

Aggression in the Line-Up

Aggression in the line-up is viewed as a navigational tool for negotiating capital and positions of power in the line-up. Local surfing etiquette and protocol allows for aggressive displays as surfers struggle to find their positions and gain access to waves. Although aggression is traditionally viewed as a 'male' surfing characteristic, my male

research participants did not necessarily identify and agree with ‘aggression’ while they were surfing. Robert expressed his concerns when paddling out through the line-up. “Sometimes you can feel the bristling of egos as you are paddling out… it feels as though that negativity is feeding everyone else”. He continued by stating, “I guess there is just an element of machoism without a doubt. Some men just get aggressive and have a lot they feel they need to prove”. Yet, Robert did not always feel as through he could harness an ‘aggressive’ manor while in the line-up, yet he understood when a certain ‘level’ of aggression was needed in terms of localism.

> I don’t know if [locals] have less of a right, but I totally understand and can empathise with locals who get aggressive and tell people to get out of the water and just want to keep the spot for themselves. At times I would have no qualms about being a bit of a bastard.

Robert appears to recognise that local surfing etiquette allows for aggression when directed at ‘other’ surfers. In this way, aggression is a tactful tool for marginalising participants and dominating in the line-up in order to build capital. Aggression in the line-up is displayed in various ways, is experienced by surfers differently, and has unique qualities in the surf culture context.

Recently, I witnessed an example of aggressive behaviour on the part of the local professional surfers during one of my participant observation sessions at Manu Bay. I was aware that the professionals were in the water because they would appear on three out of every five waves. These three local male professionals were in effect, ‘dominating’ the line-up. Each time they approached the front of the queue they took precedence and caught waves because they held incredible amounts of symbolic, social and cultural capital; they access waves with impunity. As explained in Chapter Three, such behaviour

is some time viewed as poor etiquette and frowned upon, but these professional surfers got away with it because they have extremely high levels of symbolic capital and were well renowned in the Raglan surfing community. In addition to their rule-breaking, these professional surfers exhibited overtly 'aggressive' behaviour in the way they were verbally addressing the thick crowd. As they rode along the wave, the men yelled violently with words such as "fuck-off kook!", "Get out of the water t-bags", "Go back to where you came from!" It is this verbal communication in the line-up that appears aggressive and territorial to others in the water, and although many of the surfers in the line-up were locals, these men had authority in terms of symbolic capital in the form of honour, respect and prestige. In this way, they set the precedence for other surfers in the water to gain access to various forms of capital during a session and, most notably, access to the waves. Therefore, these men had the ability to determine, and thus, distribute capital to other surfers in the field through their social positioning. These well established surfers have earned their social capital before stepping into the water because they are viewed in the surfing media, and they will have access to any other form of capital in the line-up because they already have well establish identities as professional New Zealand surfers.

This example shows how dominant male surfers successfully manipulate the 'rules' to access capital the line-up. Although, men's physical performance in surf culture is "[t]he aspect of the surfer's gaze [which] involves an appraisal of skill and style" (Ford and Brown 2006:79), dominant and aggressive surfers have a general consensus on who has, and has not, the ability to impress and access waves. Therefore, aggressive surfers

hold the dominant positions as they display explosive manoeuvres (both verbally and non-verbally) in the line-up to ensure social, symbolic and cultural capital in the field.

Another dichotomy in surf culture has been associated with the 'older' surfing mentalities (rooted in Eastern traditional philosophies), and 'newer' surfing mentalities (aggressive and competitive ideologies). These two different ways of performance and ways of participation within "the social construction of the experience of riding a wave" is an "ill-defined tension between the social recognition aspect of being seen to perform, and the more spiritual or individualist orientation of the lone surfer in communion with nature" (Ford and Brown 2006: 77). Robert emphasises this in the following discourse,

> I base my whole life around it. I am never really happy if I am too far from the ocean. [Surfing] puts me on reset; it puts me back on level. Often things are really hectic and my head is racing and I will rush home and grab my board and just get out there. Often I will get out there and even if it's not really good, as soon as I see the sea I have a transformation. I am automatically really calm. Even if I don't go surfing, I will just sit there and look at it and just enjoy that feeling that the sea invokes in me.

John also emphasises the experience, "I am definitely taking in the whole experience of the ocean, and the sky, and the sun. It can be very spiritual. I don't really get aggressive, but I can't be spiritual and aggressive at the same time, I just can't". These men are torn between the need to seen performing and the devotion to nature. Such a desire for a communion with nature was expressed by John and Robert as 'spiritual'. John highlights how the physical conditions, as well as his psychological state, influences his approach on a particular day:

> The line-up is constantly changing and that's the sort of grey area where you can't really define it. The ocean leaves enough to chance where, even if it's strictly

> defined there's still going to be some variability. Sometimes you want to be more aggressive to get waves, other times you sit out there and just be with yourself.

Since the line-up is continually recreated and understood differently by these men, their experiences shift depending on their moods, the conditions, and the social make-up in the water. Many male surfers have similar experiences as surfing historian Douglas Booth (2008: 17) explains, "I don't feel a sense of deeply shared cultural bonds with other surfers: the pleasures experienced are all mine. Beyond time in the water, my only contact with surfing culture comes from reading surfing magazines". In these magazines, surfers often access leading social and political trends. A New Zealand example is *Kiwi Surf* Magazine. In the latest issue (April/May 2008), an article was written by a male surfer with concerns for a male friend struggling with depression. This surfer's objective was to raise the awareness of men's mental health issues as he states "one in six males will experience depression and/or anxieties at some stage in their lives" (Burke 2008: 32). He emphasised how mental illness is in fact common for even top professional surfing athletes such Occy and Tom Curren. He believes it is important to bring issues of mental illness and masculine identities to the foreground in this male-centred medium, and reminds readers that in order "to appreciate how good life is, you have to get right to the bottom of the barrel" (Burke 2008: 3). He believes masculinity for men is blurred in society today and should not be restricted by traditional notions of what it is to be masculine. Stereotyping male surfing identities is viewed as negative because "[w]e live in a society that dictates staunchness and a tough guy attitude, as male emotional problems are swept under the carpet and left to boil up" (32). The point I allude to here is, not all male surfers support the aggressive image surfing portrays to a wider audience,

and, therefore, understand ‘masculinity’ in more ways than one. Consider John’s comment:

> I think [surfing the points] can be a little bit intimidating, like if there was just a bunch of macho men out there, I don’t really feel comfortable in that environment. And I won’t even sit in the pack myself. I will sit to the side. I don’t really want to get in the middle of that testosterone fest.

John illustrates how “many men (if not most) cannot meet the cultural ideal of the dominant masculinity, if they tried, they themselves may risk subordination through demonstrating their own failure” (Ford and Brown 2006: 91). Therefore, men may feel threatened as “the impact” of various masculinities in the line-up, “subordinates men as well” as women (Ford and Brown 2006: 85). Therefore, men in surf culture negotiate surfing in a variety of ways, through a variety of lenses, and approach sessions differently. As John and Robert interpret their experiences, I discovered how their differences were less significant than the commonalities they experienced in the line-up. One important commonality these men had was their habitus.

Habitus in the Line-up

As previously stated, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus could be viewed as a patterned behaviour unconsciously adopted by the surfer who has “grown up learning and acquiring a set of cultural competences” (Jenkins 2002: 70). For John and Robert, habitus is the embodiment of surfing in/on the body which began with their entrance into surfing. John and Robert are similarities in their habitus and experienced similarities in their surfing social surrounding because of their cultural unconscious or habitus. Their socialisation is

reflected in the ritualised washing of their wetsuits, their daily commitment to checking waves, and the countless hours of maintaining their most sacred object, the surfboard. More importantly, these men have spent their lives in the water learning how the ocean, the surfer and the surfboard, connect for a brief moment in a union of culture and nature (Fiske 1989). The "experimental imprint of a particular type of wave inscribes itself on the body, augmenting the habitus and extending the body's ability to feel its way in different surf conditions" (Ford and Brown 2006: 125).

Surfers who enter surfing at early ages, all things being relatively equal, will have a more deeply embedded habitus than a surfer who has entered later. Although John and Robert were from different parts of the world, they both possessed similar habitus because they entered surf culture when they were roughly nine or ten years of age and have devoted their lives to 'chasing waves'. Since they had grown up completely engrossed in the surfing lifestyle, they both had a level of cultural knowledge unknown to a new initiate.

Robert had an innate sense about surfing in Raglan. He knew where waves would break on different tides, what locals would surf in these locations, and how to access the line-up depending on these conditions. Robert might not be aware of the advantages he possesses because according to Bourdieu, it is unlikely that he is conscious of his habitus. Robert's habitus is directly related to his skills in the surf (cultural capital), the social relationships he acquires over this time (social capital), and the respect he has gained as a result (symbolic capital). Here, Bourdieu's conceptual scheme of field (the line-up), practice (time and skill), capital (the knowledge accumulated over time spent in the

water) and habitus (the way he inscribes this negotiation upon himself unconsciously) all have a bearing on surfer negotiating a surf session.

One way surfers distinguish between 'others' is through equipment. The major distinction in equipment is longboards versus shortboards. Longboarding and shortboarding have been struggling side-by-side in the line-up for close to a century. Longboarding is the 'older' form of surfing because it was the first style to be developed in the modern world (Booth 2000(a), 2000(b), 2004, Evers 2004, Ford and Brown 2006, Henderson 2001, Pearsons1979). Shortboards developed with technological advances and are the predominant and mainstream equipment of surfing today. Although tensions arise around different wave-riding equipment, surfers with similar habitus and social, symbolic and cultural capital will be able to perform in the water will with less pressure from other surfers because of their established status as surfers. Both Robert and John can access positions of power in the field more easily than some, and in this way, they reveal their commonalties in their surfing identities.

John: You can go way out and be by yourself [on a longboard] and have a good time ya know. I longboarded for three years straight and that was cool but, there were only certain spots you'd feel totally comfortable taking one of them out. I didn't get that hard of a time.

Robert: It is such a different head space when you are riding on a longboard. When I surf a *thruster* I often find I would come in annoyed with myself because I couldn't do a certain move or I didn't land it, or I didn't feel like I was ripping. Yes, surfing a thruster is very aggro but, surfing on a longboard [prohibits] you from doing the aggressive moves. Suddenly you can sit further out the back and catch different waves. It's more about style and flow with longboarding.

John and Robert access and utilise different surfboard technologies when surfing, they hold more dominant positions in the line-up based on their cultural, symbolic, and social

capital, and they report to experience surfing as both ‘aggressive’ and ‘spiritual’ while participating. In this way, these men had various ways they negotiate, discuss and practise their surfing identities in the line-up. In more ways than one, Robert and John were similar in their experiences despite their different backgrounds; they were bound by their commonalties as surfers.

Another commonality was described in the embodiment of surfing, or the feelings these men experienced while riding on the wave. Robert described his surfing experience:

> [Surfing] humbles you. Ten minutes of two hours is actually on the wave, but for those ten minutes you are the most present than anytime you have ever been. So who knows, that ten minutes of pure focus, those ten minutes just remove you from everything else. Why do [we] do it for those ten minutes? [We] can’t consciously say what it is that drives [us] to do it.

It could be said that Robert experiences shifts in consciousness while surfing. Two concepts assist in explaining how such shifts work, the concept of flow (Csikszentmihaly 1991) and edgework (Lyng 1990). Moments of flow are reported to have universal characteristics and can be seen as a “state of focused attention or deep concentration on a limited set of stimuli, a distorted sense of time, a feeling of personal transcendence and merging of the individual and object” (Lyng 1990: 863). Csikszentmihaly (1991) described flow as ‘optimal experience’ and is achieved when the body and mind are stretched to their limits “in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile” (Lyng 1990: 863). In comparison to flow, Lyng’s (1990) ‘edgework’ is a term used to describe the negotiation of the boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness. Fear is an essential element in reaching this state of consciousness, and edgework is a unique skill in that it is one’s “ability to maintain control over a situation

that verges on complete chaos, a situation most people would regard as entirely uncontrollable" (Lyng 1990: 859). The aptitude for this requires the "ability to avoid being paralysed by fear" and is a skill that is associated with mental toughness as edgeworkers do not run from fear, they run towards it. Running towards fear to achieve mental toughness is precisely the motivational quality that drives them to seek these experiences. Activities that thrill-seekers participate may include, skydiving, base jumping, motorcar racing, or big-wave surfing. Seekers who master the skills necessary can test the performance levels of their specific edgework activity and push the limits of the self and the technologies they are using.

Lyng (1990: 883) argues that edgework might possibly be the only means that people have today for "achieving self determination and authenticity". In other words, surfers feel their experiences are ineffable and hyper-real and can create a heightened sense of self. Surfing acts in this way as it has a similar quality that provides surfers with a sense of discovery, a new reality, and helps to push levels of performance. If the level of performance is constantly being challenged and pushed, surfers will have to seek new opportunities to use new skills in order to increase or maintain optimum experiences. Therefore, the "first requisite for flow is striking a positive balance between these two elements: the challenges you think you face and the skills you think you have" (Jackson and Csikszentmihaly 1999: 6); the bigger the challenge, the more opportunity to reach a state of flow. Because surfers claim these moments heighten a sense of self, it is no wonder participants base an entire life around achieving these experiences.

Kotler (2006:214) described his interpretation of surfing experiences, "either you go from that heightened adrenaline state produced by catching a wave directly into the

incredible Zen-like focus needed to ride a wave or you fall down- there's no other way to participate". The idea that these experiences invoke an emotional response in an individual can only be valued if we recognise that such experiences are ultimately real to these people regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender (Hoffman 1992). Of particular interest is how surfing for Robert and John "can provide a quasi-religious vehicle of understanding and transcendence from the mundane realities of daily life" (Shilling 2005: 101). Such experiences help create purpose, self awareness, and at these moments people report feelings 'alive', sensing higher states of self than at any other time in their daily lives. As a result, people need these experiences and often are reported as addictive in the sense that it confirms validates and places meaning upon surfers' lives. The desires for continued participation for John and Robert, and the experiences in shifting consciousness, indicates that these men have similarities in their motivations for surfing and in the processes over time that inscribe their habitus. Next, the male surfers express their experiences and interpretation of women in the line-up.

Men's Experience of Women in the Line-Up

The purpose of this section is to present the men's discourse on surfing with women. To reiterate from the chapter's opening statement, Ford and Brown (2006: 87) explain that "some expressions of masculinity (e.g. strength, assertiveness, courage) and femininity (e.g. grace, deference, passivity)" are given more symbolic value than others. This section explores exactly what expressions of masculinity and femininity are worthy of social, cultural, and symbolic capital according to the male interviewees in this study. Stated differently, what is relevant to the social construction of gender in surf culture in

Raglan. I questioned the men directly on their female surfing companions and both were able to and, eventually, articulate their opinions about the role of women in the waves.

Initially, Robert argued that he did not feel any difference in the line-up due to gender other than difference based on ability. “I don’t think it has anything to do with their gender, it’s more their ability”. However, once Robert began to think more deeply about gender in the line-up, further issues came to the surface. Robert’s first direct reflection on female surfers was as follows.

> Girls in the water are attractive, it is an attractive sport and they just seem to make light of the situation. A lot of the girls that I have surfed with are not beginners, but they are not totally aggressive and they are not so worried about dropping-in and it’s just fun. It is so refreshing when there are girls out in the water. They just seem to have more fun. I don’t know why. When they drop-in on me, it just makes me smile. If I am in a bad mood then, I automatically think, why am I not having as much fun as them?!

As gender characteristics were elicited from the men, they continued to refer to the female surfer as less aggressive and less serious. This was highlighted above as Robert said women in the water were “just having fun”, “girls made light of the situation”, and they were even considered “refreshing” even when breaking rules. Clearly, Robert viewed female surfers as different to male surfers. In comparison to male surfers, women are not a threat in the line-up:

> If [women] are there bobbing around in the line-up and they aren’t very aware of where the waves are breaking or where to catch them, then I will paddle around them to catch a wave.

Robert might make assumptions about women in the line-up when he commenting on them “bobbing around”. Perhaps he generalises that women posses less knowledge about

the movement of the waves or how the line-up works. He says he will jump the queue if women appear to be “bobbing around”, and in this way, he marginalises women as a result. When he claims “they aren’t very aware of where the waves are breaking or where to catch them”, he makes assumptions about their knowledge and skill levels in the line-up. Such assumptions would indicate that Robert believes this particular woman lacks various forms of capital in the field. If she cannot practice according to the standard of surfing during a particular session, that she lacks cultural and symbolic capital. In this way, gender as a cultural distinction is similar to non-local status as a cultural distinction in that women are viewed as holding subordinate positioning in the line-up, much like that of non-locals. I asked John specifically about gender differences.

> Oh, there definitely is. But if the women are going to act, and I don’t know, I hope this doesn’t sound sexist. If the women are going to act aggressively like some of the guys, then I think it’s going to be a level playing field. They have to expect to get dropped-in on and they have to expect that someone’s going to yell at them if they do something stupid. You can’t have it both ways. You can’t be like, I am going to do whatever I want, oh but I am a woman and therefore you can’t get mad.

John point out how women have to participate according to the male standards to gain access to waves and accumulate capital in the field. John holds the ability to set standards in the water because surfing is judged based on a male valuation system (Booth 2000). Thus, men are the ones defining the standards and criteria for capital allocation in the surfing field. Robert suggested women were “innocent” and that they are not a threat because they lack the cultural capital necessary to negotiate the field effectively and gain higher statuses as surfers. As the researcher, I pose the question, are women really ignorant of the rules, or do they break rules intentionally to gain access to the waves?

Many women will obviously be able to intentionally access waves as they gain momentum in their habitus over years, gain social, symbolic and cultural capital and continue to practice in the field. Perhaps Robert makes reference to novice women who have yet to acquire the skill and knowledge for participating successfully in the line-up. Nevertheless, Robert and John inadvertently set standards for what surfing culture participation entails. Robert discussed further,

Sarah: Would you act differently if a girl dropped-in on you?

Robert: I would less likely yell at a girl. It makes me stoked that they are catching a wave and standing up. Either they are a) stupid enough to not be looking who else is on the wave or b) too gung-ho to know that they are dropping-in on someone.

Sarah: So, she is either stupid or too gung-ho?

Robert: Not too gung-ho but, keen enough just to be dropping-in and not care. This just makes light of the whole situation which is good because if I am being a bit serious, and it's a girl, I am like, "oh, just relax she probably didn't see you or she's just…" It's like they are just so innocent and having good fun and that pure joy just affects you. So, it's great it makes you laugh.

Sarah: And if a guy drops in?

Robert: I would yell at him.

Robert's quote strongly suggests that he treated women differently from men, thus there are different sets of rules for men and women. With different rules for participants based on their gender this suggest gender as a characteristic that creates otherness in surfing identities, similar to the non-local characteristic discussed earlier. Such characteristics marginalised others and limit their access to positions in the line-up that allow them more wave time. So, does gender discourses and practices hinder a woman's learning curve

because she is continually assumed to have less cultural capital and thus treated as subordinate?

In an earlier quote, Robert claimed to have no qualms about disadvantaging a woman by jumping the queue if she was "bobbing around". This appears as a double standard to the benefit of men since women may be more easily dismissed from their rightful place in the line up. Also a double standard seems to be at work with regard to dropping in when women get off more easily with a smile and men are yelled at. John also noted that he tends to treat women in the water differently. "Kelly just didn't want to get near the rocks at all at Manu Bay. [Gender] is different, it should be. I definitely wouldn't yell at a woman. I would try and help them".

John may indicate that women need help in, out, and while entering the water. His experiences with women varied depending on the spaces in which women were surfing. If he surfed with his wife at Manu, then he knew she would need his assistance. If he was surfing Indicators when it was six-foot and pumping, then a women had his respect in the line-up. Yet, even in the more intensified situations while surfing Indicators with women who had the ability to gain John's respect (and thus build upon their capital), the women in the line-up were still treated differently because they were assumed to have less strength, stamina and rule etiquette. John continues:

> Well, I think [women] treat me differently. For example, there was this one time a girl just blatantly dropped-in on me. I don't really ever say anything to anyone, and the impression that I got from her, because she looked back and she saw me and she kept going. The impression that I got was, "I am the girl, and you are probably not going to do anything so I am just going to drop in on you anyway!" That was the vibe that she was putting out because I saw her drop in on a couple of other people. She was competent. I felt as though, like I said she was putting out that vibe that "I am a woman and I can do whatever I want", kind of, "what

> are you going to do, fight me?" That was how I felt about it, but at the same time, if someone were to drop in on her she would get upset, so…

A key point here is that some competent female surfers may be taking advantage of the fact that they are female, whereas, other women in the line-up are making honest mistakes due to their lack of cultural knowledge. Women gain prestige in the line-up by participating in extreme conditions, by taking big drops and by proving their abilities in the process. They gain respect by showing knowledge of the wave-break, by throwing fast and flashy manoeuvres (men standards again), and by jumping off rocks to access the water without the need for help from men. John and Robert both make distinctions about surfers based on their sex, and therefore, generalise about how men and women perform differently because of their socially constructed notions about gender.

Remember from Chapter Three that breaking the rules is essentially how surfers successfully negotiate the field. Thus, rule breaking is accomplished with more autonomy as surfers gain their symbolic capital. Symbolic power distinguishes differences between men and women as socially constructed, not biological as women participate in creating the dominant categories that privileged men (Kay and Laberge 2004). If women suffer fewer consequences from breaking rules as John and Robert allude to, then some female surfers potentially access waves differently. In saying this, women may be harnessing this advantage and gaining a different form of capital to men. Nevertheless, my male participants discourse reveals that they treat women differently to men by assuming women have less cultural capital, less prowess and less access to waves. Yet, if surfers communicate through their body language, verbal language and individual styles, that they have the knowledge and the ability, then why did Robert and John view women with

double standards? When a woman dropped-in on John, she was communicating that she had the confidence, the ability and the knowledge of how Indicators surf break was breaking that day and how to acquire the access to waves, by dropping-in on others. Therefore, it seems as though men and women access waves similar to one another, which may pose as a gender difference.

Summary

This chapter has brought issues of localism, nationality, aggression and gender to the foreground as the men of this research highlight how surf culture in Raglan can be seen as a very male space. These men continually negotiated their surfing identities in various social spaces, and particularly in key surfing fields in Raglan. While John and Robert held high levels of performance capital in the line-up, Robert has more social and symbolic capital based on his local status. This discussion has revealed differences in surf culture based on local/non-local, longboarding/shortboarding and masculinity/femininity. Such differences are the cause of tensions and ultimately exclusionism to various cultural members because of their status as surfers. The important point to note at this stage is that surfers have combinations of these surfing characteristics and therefore, jostle their identities differently depending on the social geography around them at the time as "surf-breaks are places where embodied meaning and experienced of gender are not necessarily reproduced according to dominant norms, but present possibilities for reworking gender" (Waitt 2008: 77).

Gender identity appears to be at play and this power is arguably in the masculine corner. Because traditional notions of masculinity and femininity continually creep to the

surface and still reside in surfers from early stages in childhood, enculturation into surf culture and so forth, removing these predetermined notions of gender is hard to remove during surfing social interactions. Further, they reveal how women in the surfing space hold subordinate positions to men as men set the stand for what is considered 'good surfing'.

Although gender is constantly reproduced in a process between the social construction of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', male surfers do not necessarily associate with the dominant traditional concept that masculinity instils. In fact, many male surfing enthusiasts continue to surf in the New Zealand waters and do not necessarily "feel a sense of deeply shared cultural bonds with other surfers" (Booth 2008: 17), that the 'fratriarchy' intends to ensure. Indeed, participation in surf culture helps men in contemporary Western society to (re)construct, maintain and negotiate their gender identities at a time where 'masculinity' is supposedly uncertain (Shilling 2005). Kimmel (2004) agued that masculinity is in fact invisible in much the same way the colour 'white' is invisible to 'white' people as many men struggle with identity because of the increased presence of women. In this way, masculinity is not fixed, but rather is a position in gender relations that is always contestable (Ford and Brown 2006). Booth (2000) argues that surf culture is based on a male valuation system. John and Roberts identified with, negotiate around, and helped to place meaning upon this valuation system in the surfing spaces of the line-up.

Before moving on, I would like to address some of the questions I posed in the first chapter of this thesis. At the beginning of this research I posed many questions relating to the female surfer and the spaces of the line-up. I wondered if female surfers

had to ‘get more aggressive’ in order to gain respect and honour in the field. Do women have to surf like ‘the men’ to gain similar forms of symbolic capital? It appears from the statements offered by the men in this research that this may be the case. In the following chapter I will explore the women’s experiences and interpretations of the spaces of the line-up, in doing so I give female surfers in Raglan a voice.

Chapter Five: Women's Experiences in the Line-up

The rise in female involvement in surf culture has been associated with the development of surfboard technology that produced lighter boards with fins (Booth 2000). This enabled women to manoeuvre these boards through the surf and female participation grew markedly. The technology change also changed the body/skill dynamic, and in turn, the social and gender interactions in the line-up (Ford and Brown 2006). Although women are increasingly acknowledged for their participation, strong stereotypes about their bodily performances persist as women continually struggle to acquire similar forms of capital to men. Problematically, the "depictions of the surfing lifestyle tend[s] to take the male-dominated vision of this social practice as something of a 'universal' orientation, with women's participation seen as an unproblematic inclusion into a sphere of activity" (Ford and Brown 2006: 83). And yet, some women may not see it this way. To ask this question, the line-up could be viewed as yet another contestable space in which women challenge the gendered order of a particular context, in this case surfing.

Broadly speaking, the gender order can be defined as "the way society is organised around the roles, responsibilities, activities and contributions of women and men, in other words, what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men do in different contexts. An important starting point is the fact that the 'gender order' is not set in stone – it is possible to challenge and change it" (Hannan 2006: 1). Even without recognition, women inadvertently challenge surfing's androcentric stage as they repeatedly shift positions to construct and sustain their gender identities merely through there participation (Wheaton 2004). Sporting arenas have become important sites for understanding resistance to accepted gender order as some

women challenge social inequalities while others reproduce existing gender relations (Birrel and Theberg 1994). Indeed, “women’s status as surfers and increasing resistance to subordination [is] a growing feature of surfing” (Ford and Brown 2006: 91) wherein active female participants gain status based on skill and commitment, thereby resisting any subordination into traditional gender roles. Other women reinforce the existing gender order by playing roles of passive ‘girlfriends’ or beach bunnies. Here, however, I focus on active roles on female surfers in Raglan.

This chapter illustrates how women negotiate their positions on surf culture by exploring ‘everyday’ female surfers and their gendered experiences in the line-up. Much like the men in Chapter Four, the women in this research facilitate an understanding of surf culture based on gender which is negotiated through discourse and practice in the line-up. By addressing the overarching research question of, what are the gendered experiences in surf culture, this chapter will specifically draw attention to the experience of female surfers in Raglan. Therefore, the chapter identifies how women construct, negotiate and sustain their surfing identities by focusing on their desires, interpretations and performances in surf culture.

The chapter has two main sections. Firstly, I will discuss how the women in my research negotiate the line-up by exploring topics associated with ability, surfing location, and gender. These topics subtly reveal how social positioning and status are constructed and maintained in the line-up and how women access capital in the field. Secondly, I will focus on women’s experiences and their relation with men. More specifically, this section explores female surfers’ ability to gain positions of power and access to various forms of capital in the line-up.

Women in the Line-Up

This section draws on Bourdieu's notion of class, or as I redefine it in the case of surf culture, various groups distinguished by ability. Differences in ability bring about a substantive dominant/subordinate distance between two actors. This difference creates discrepancy in how the two actors relate with one another and the access to capital they have, as well as inhibiting social bonds that can emerge in the field. This section examines these distinctions across actors by looking at two groups of women separated by their level of ability. How these women negotiate space in the line-up is useful for understanding how they produce their symbolic power in relation to others. Although I differentiated between two groups of women in Raglan who participate in different surfing spaces, and hold different ability levels, there are likely to be other identifiable groups of women participate in these spaces that are different yet again. I chose these two groups because the differences would be major and thus easily identified.

The first group is composed of self-confessed beginners whom I have affectionately termed the 'Beach Babes' because they only chose to surf the beach. The second group is that of the 'Point Wahine', the more skilled women who surf the points and whom I interviewed as a focus group. Surfing the points is arguably more challenging than the beach due mainly to the strong local pecking order that is enacted there and the intense competitive behaviour exhibited. These two groups reveal difference (and at times commonalties) in their experiences as they manage their social status, social power and self-worth, in other words, their social, symbolic and cultural capital. These women allow exploration of how capital is negotiated in the field because

they provide very different levels of ability and thus are likely to be quite far apart with respect to surfing habitus and the development of the kinds of capital that Bourdieu says get developed within habitus.

Ability in the Line-Up

A surfer's ability level plays a major role in creating, negotiating, and potentially resolving tensions in the line-up. So much so, that ability can often over-ride that of gender as marginalising factors (e.g., sex, age, and ethnicity). Learning how to participate can be a long, frustrating and often confusing journey because it takes years of investment (both time and money) and dedication to develop a deep sense of cultural knowledge or what Bourdieu refers to as cultural capital. In order to function, the novice surfer must learn the rules and etiquette as well as the athletic skills to insure access to waves and a successful progression in ability. Most beginners learn the rules and develop their abilities via a process of trial and error. Novice surfers must contend with new elements as they learn to dress according to the conditions, manoeuvre with their equipment, and locate themselves in relation to the incoming wave. This all enables them to be in the correct position to catch the moving body of water, paddle efficiently, and try to stand up amongst the (at times) social disorder in the water. An advanced surfer with years of experience may roll their eyes towards the novice beach dweller learning to get to their feet and argue that struggles develop because of them. They may forget how they too started at the novice stage, but are limited in their views because of their engrained cultural unconscious (habitus). Novices might argue that their advanced surfing companions exhibit behaviour contradictory to the rules.

Firstly, I will address the notion of ability in relation to the Beach Babes which comprised Susan (31) and Andrea (29) in one focus group. These women have a growing friendship based on their newly developed passion for surfing and constitute one of approximate four to five groups of female surfers who surf mainly in the beach space of Raglan. These groups can consist of anywhere between two and ten women at one time. In this way, Susan and Andrea make up part of a small enclave of female surfers on Ngarunui Beach in Raglan[21]. As a group, they experience common bonds as 'outsiders' (one is American the other British) and acknowledge they are not yet acquainted with many members of the community. They report feeling misplaced, yet their dedication and commitment to surfing brought them a newly found sense of confidence and sense of belonging in their new cultural surroundings.

During the initial stages of learning, the Beach Babes reported experiencing a deep insecurity with their surfing abilities as their confidence in the water often wavered. Further, their self-esteem was low as they had anxieties about wearing wetsuits and bikinis. As Andrea States:

> Everyone feels like an idiot the first time they put one on. Your insecurities come and out and you think, "Oh I don't want anyone judging me".

Such insecurities were further heightened as they experienced the power and momentum of the waves. Susan gives a clear description of some of the fears involved in learning to surf.

[21] Because of the intimidation many surfers feel about the point breaks, some surfers choose only to surf the beach because it is considered easier for a variety of reasons. Some surfers are not interested in surfing in a space that is highly localised and requires high levels of skill.

> If you go *over the falls*, or you go for a wave and you *nose dive*, it hurts! You take a pounding hard and you hit the water hard. Then, you get the full weight of the wave breaking on you. It is the fear of all that water smashing into you. When you first begin surfing you go out wherever, whenever and you don't really worry about what the tide is doing, you just want to get the white-water. Your level of ambition is the next step up; putting your knee down, standing up, catching *a green wave*, you know these baby steps. But they are hard to accomplish, because when you go for a wave and you think, "Oh no this is too big" and it is such a horrible feeling. And instead of just trying to make the wave, you just bail in that moment of panic. I just throw myself off my board. It is confidence and all part of learning.

Susan and Andrea point out that confidence plays a major role in the learning process and is vital to develop if they are to successfully progress. As beginners, they have limited forms of cultural knowledge in the water in their abilities to read waves, knowledge about tides and rips (how they can be used advantageously while surfing) and how to position themselves in the best places to catch waves.

Group distinction can be viewed across ability levels where these beginners have limited access to capital when compared to elite surfers. The elite surfer will have a richer, more comprehensive habitus than the beginner due to more time spent in the field. Also, the elite surfer will have they accumulated cultural knowledge as part of this habitus and will have much more symbolic capital to draw on than the beginner when in the line-up. Capital is negotiated across groups creating boundaries between them in the field (Jenkins 2002). Therefore, it is important to understand how surfers gain access to various forms of capital based on ability level.

While Susan's ability levels are increasing, she reveals her novice positioning in the line-up when discussing *party waves*.

> At the beach you can get more than one person on a wave. You get a wave breaking and one person can go left, one person can go right, and one person can

> go straight. You can get three people on a wave and still get a good ride. You can not really share waves well at the point. And the more your ability improves and the more control you have, you can steer around other people. When you are beginning you pretty much just go straight!

The party wave may be fun for the novice surfer which creates opportunity to play and catch more waves, but the idea of the party wave would not be acceptable at the points because participation is more competitive and unidirectional (one person per wave). At the points, party waves are often referred to as dropping-in. At the beach, beginner are concerned with learning to stand up and get to their feet, and they have yet to acquire the knowledge about riding waves, dropping-in or manoeuvring around others in the line-up. Beginners have yet to acquire this knowledge in more advanced spaces because novice surfers have not yet participated in them. The Beach Babes' have yet to acquire the cultural knowledge necessary to understand how a session plays out in the line-up, as successful manoeuvring in these surfing spaces takes time to develop.

As groups of novice surfers find similarities in their cultural knowledge (cultural capital) and experiences, they become closer in "their constitution as a social group through political struggle" through the "collective recognition" of a surfer's "identity as distinct from other groups"(Jenkins 2002: 88). The Beach Babes are preoccupied with their visual distinctions as surfers, and how they appear in relation to the wider cultural community. In her discussion of windsurfing culture, Wheaton (2004: 6) expresses issues of legitimacy as "an engagement with, or site of, identity politics that are expressed around competing and passionate claims about the right to belong and the right to be recognised". Thus, recognition in the line-up space is vital as surfers continually spend time in the water. As Susan States:

> I constantly get asked, "Can you stand up on your board? Is that your board? Can you catch waves? Can you catch green waves?" Why would I not be able to stand up on my board? People are genuinely shocked that I surf. "So you surf then?" "Why do you look so surprised? It's Raglan, doesn't everyone surf?" They think that you are at a certain level and you are never going to get past that. "But you can't surf can you?" You can't actually surf, because to him surfing is riding a ten foot wave out at *Outsides*, because what I do is just splashing around at the beach. Even when you are out in the water, guys will snake you because they just have it in their head that you're a girl and you're never going to make that wave. But then you do!

Here, Susan suggests the female position in surf culture is perhaps overshadowed as men interpret women as non-serious or non-skilled. Susan suggests that men consider women subordinate in the line-up as they question women's' abilities and motivations in surf culture. Issue of legitimacy seem central for juggling how activities such as surfing are understood by the women who participate in them (Wheaton 2004). These women struggle with notions of legitimacy when trying to construct their identities as surfers. In the eyes of more committed and long-term members, she may not be a 'legitimate' surfer but regardless of what some men around her believe, Susan argues that she is 'a surfer' even if a self-confessed beginner. In contrast to novice surfers who often seem preoccupied with how 'others' perceive them as 'surfers', more advanced surfers are more concerned with their performances in the line-up (Ford and Brown 2006). Yet, who defines a 'legitimate' surfer identity? How long do you have to live in Raglan and surf waves at the beach before your surfing identity is accepted? How well do you have to surf before your identity is confirmed by other long-time members? Interestingly, many of the Point Wahine identified more struggles with the male valuation system than the beginners did (Booth 2002).

The Point Wahine comprised Jane (29), Kate (35) and Lisa (33). These women are all very skilled surfers who have been living and surfing in Raglan for many years. Unlike the Beach Babes, these women paddle out at the points on a regular basis and have different experiences in relation to navigating space in the typically, hyper-competitive, male-dominated line-ups. The Point Wahine are articulate about ability and gender, which is obvious in their discourse, their depth of cultural knowledge, and levels of skill that is all far greater than the Beach Babes. Reasons for this stem from their combined thirty years surfing experience. The Point Wahine point out that as the crowd levels in the line-up increases, tensions between members arise. Often these tensions are between members with different abilities as surfers with higher skill try to access waves, while new initiates are learning various rules. Lisa articulates:

> I don't really think that I am going to have much fun out [at the point] because if everyone is dropping-in on everyone and people are going to be in the way, then it gets to a point where I will just wait for a weekday. I think most people know the etiquette when you get to a certain level of surfing. There are people that are still learning and that's cool, they don't really understand etiquette. Most people would suggest that they should probably just go surf on the beach if they don't really understand the rules.

Lisa suggests that beginners surf the beach. This highlights how hierarchy in the line-up is also ability based. Lisa's comment points toward her cultural knowledge, she knows the etiquette and recognised dropping-in when she sees it, whereas the beginners think it is just a party wave. Lisa's attitude is also similar to those of the men's attitudes in Chapter Four. In her discourse on surfing styles, Kate expresses her opinions between men and women in the water.

> I find that women don't tend to *slash up* the waves and emaciate them as much as what guys will. There seems like more flow with women and more aggression with men. And to me it's such a crime, oh that beautiful wave! And the men are trying to slash up and *spray* you when they are passing you. I have no desire whatsoever to do that, it's not in my surfing.

Here, Kate associates differences between surfing styles, that of an aggressive nature and that of a more graceful style in surfing. Her comment suggests she views men as more aggressive in the line-up than women. In another breath, however, she expresses that surfing requires a combination of traditionally-defined 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits:

> I normally surf my longboard because I like the style and the momentum with it, the flow with it. It is a little slower, but I just like that glide, it's more rhythmic to me. But the dynamics of actual surfing is that you just have to have the aggression and have the will power, and the strength, and the stamina. There is a lot of physical attributes that go along with surfing. It can be a mind thing, spiritually, emotionally as well, but there is so much physical strength involved at the start and that does put a lot of women off. It's like they won't persist with it. It's not an easy sport.

Kate indicates that surfing is a combination of "strength" and "stamina" but that is also can hold qualities that are a more "flowing" and "rhythmic". The strength and stamina could be interpreted as traditional male traits while flowing could be seen as more feminine. Kate thus suggests that women negotiating the surfing spaces may harness their 'masculinity' and their 'femininity' in the line-up. In their negotiation to access waves, the Point Wahine draw upon their existing performance, social and cultural capital which is considerably more substantial when compared to the Beach Babes as the discussion continues. In our discussion, I inquired about the Point Wahine feelings on competitiveness in the line-up.

Sarah: Do you ever feel competitive for waves?

Kate: Depending on my mood. If I am hungry and I haven't had a good wave for a few weeks…hunger takes over.

Jane: Depends on what sort of wave it is. It could be a slow ferry ride down a cloud if you wanted it to be, or it could be a fast wave trying to get around *sections*, or trying to learn *bottom turns* and *top turns*, or going over rocks. That's why I love surfing Whale Bay because you've got those rocks and it's quit a mental game really. You have to make that *section*, and then you've got the *sergeants table* that just pops out, and you have gotta stay high on your wave, and then you drop back down, and another *section* and then there's more rocks on the inside.

Jane's ability to articulate her wave experience clearly suggests she has advanced skills in the line-up. She knows the space and knows how to navigate is, therefore, Jane possess a great deal of cultural capital in the Raglan surfing scene. It could be argued that she possess symbolic capital as she is able to surf this advanced space as the men may give her access. Further, she expresses how the physical conditions (wave formation, wave size, winds, tides) as well as her psychological state (happy, sad, tiredness) influences how she approaches her surfing on a particular day. Jane indicates that condition determines her approach to surfing and differs to Susan and Andrea who "go out whenever". Interestingly, Jane and Kate experience surfing as holistic in that it has physical, spiritual and emotional qualities which was very similar to how the men felt in the previous chapter, and may also experience moments of 'flow' while surfing (Csikszentmihaly 1991). However, it is arguable as to whether Jane's consciousness (or lack of consciousness) is greater than the Beach Babes because the beginner's also experienced moments similar to flow as Susan expresses:

> Surfing is probably as close as you are ever going to get to flying… because whenever you get a really good drop and you get that speed, and you hear the white-water breaking behind you, you feel like you are flying. I don't always feel the board underneath my feet and I am not thinking about anything else at that

> particular moment in time. Your mind is completely blank to everything apart from the fact that you are on this awesome wave,

Although Susan and Jane sometimes differ in their surfing experiences, their love and dedication for surfing is similar.

As the Point Wahine successfully negotiate the advanced surfing spaces of Raglan, their "love for surfing suggests possibilities for both transforming as well as maintaining performances of gender" (Waitt 2008: 90) because they are able to resist and challenge traditional notion of gender. Women who hold high levels of performance, social and cultural capital such as the Point Wahine, are able to continually renegotiate their gender identities as "they work within rather than subvert, traditional patterns of gender domination in sport, [and] illustrate how cultural change can be contingent, gradual, partial, a matter of negotiation" (Wheaton 2004: 21). The Point Wahine, therefore, are able to struggle for 'legitimacy' in the field, "or the recognition of the legitimacy of the power associated with a specific form of capital (Kay and Laberge 2004:157), or their performance and symbolic capital in the field.

In comparison to the Point Wahine who feel "hungry" and competitive for waves, Susan expresses how she negotiates on the beach in Raglan.

> Surfing is not a competitive thing. I am not a very competitive person. I go out surfing to be with friends. Yeah, we are all on own individual boards and we catch our own individual waves, or get party waves. But we are not competing against other people. You compete against yourself.

Susan experiences surfing as non-competitive. Arguably, however, in order to gain performance, symbolic and cultural capital in the field, a surfer must be aggressive and competitive in order to access waves. The experiences of beginners in the line-up appear

to focus less on competitive characteristics and more on the social aspects in the water. Susan and Andrea's relationship to one another, or their social capital, was considered vital in their growth as female surfers.

Social Capital

Of particular importance in this research is the Beach Babes' relationship to other female surfers. This relationship is considered crucial for creating, maintaining and negotiating female surfing identities, and I would argue is the initial form of social capital for women learning to surf. In this way, social capital for these women was the foundation of power positioning for women to build upon in the line-up. Since the surfing initiation process is long and difficult, the Beach Babes built new identities as surfers with, by, and because of one another. Female companionship was central for building confidence, drawing inspiration and providing encouragement for female surfers to progress. Moreover, because they evidently viewed surfing as a highly social pastime, female companionship was fundamental in getting them to 'stand up and surf![22]' Andrea explains further:

> I think girls in general are chattier and have better sense of humour out in the water. We laugh about what has happened recently or what is happening right then, like you biffed it on the wave. It's not really very competitive. I enjoy surfing with the ladies and Susan really gets me out there.

Although Andrea perceives surfing as a non-serious leisure activity initally, she asserts that other women are important in the line-up. Consider Susan's statement.

[22] 'Stand up and surf' is the local Raglan Surf School slogan. This school was also where these women had their original surf lessons, where they found accommodation upon arriving in Raglan, and where they found future employment.

> If I saw a guy doing some crazy manoeuvre on a wave I wouldn't think much about it. But, if I saw a girl doing it then I would know straightway that I had the potential.

Clearly, as the beginner babes on the beach spent more time in the water and immersed in Raglan surf culture, they were building up a knowledge base and beginning to form opinions of what constituted 'good surfing'. As beginners, they built their initial capital in the line-up based on their social relationships. Since participating only at the beach limits a surfer's ability to access forms of capital other than social capital, building social relationships is crucial in forming positions of power in the line-up. Regardless of a women's power position in the line-up, capital was initially created by women prioritising their social relationships with other women. The camaraderie among women became integral in the surfing experience, thus social capital is their initial form of capital in supporting them against exclusion in the water from men and women of greater ability levels.

Social capital also appears to be important to the Point Wahine. These more skilled surfers describe female companionship as significant in their learning:

Kate: Having another girl or, group of girls that are at the same level as you makes such a huge difference.
Lisa: So much better isn't it?
Kate: Yeah, to your own learning ability and your confidence.

These women describe how confidence is integral in surfing in much the same way the Beach Babes experienced; with, by, and because of other women. Even elite female surfers place meaning and value on female companionship. Consider Laura's comment:

> I can sit out there and talk and talk and talk and miss set waves. If there's another girl out there and you're just having a good talk, especially one of your girlfriends. I have seen that happen heaps and it's quite cool. Often my friends will says, "I am not talking to you because I will never catch any waves!" There is not much of a huge population of girl surfers so, when you go out you have a catch-up in the water.

Because of the importance of female companionship in the female surfing experience, it may be argued that women have a valuation system of their own that privileges women, socialising, female companionship and 'girl time'.

In contrast to the social capital gained from the relationships with other women, the Beach Babes and Point Wahine relationships with male surfers differed and were more related to ability levels and demonstrations of physical prowess. The Point Wahine had more social capital with men than the Beach Babes due to their relationships with local men in the line-up. For example, in my observations at the points, girlfriends of top-male surfers gain additional capital and thus access to waves by association with the boyfriend. This association to other men in the field is at times more important than their performance capital as women with less association, but highly more visible skill, are not able to access waves in the same way. In this example, social capital supersedes that of performance capital because of a woman's relationships to men in the water (brothers, boyfriends, husbands, uncles, and sons). The Point Wahine, therefore, have the established relationships, have accumulated symbolic, performance, and cultural capital and negotiate the line-up very differently to the Beach Babes.

These two groups of women differ in the way they negotiate surfing spaces and who they must negotiate around when they are in the line-up. While the Point Wahine had varied forms of capital, the Beach Babes were beginning to establish social capital

by, and with, the other women in the water as they were learning. Eventually, and in time, the Beach Babes will build new forms of performance, cultural and social capital as they negotiate around the line-up. So, although these groups of women differ in ability, they were bound by their similarities in their gendered body. As discussed in Chapter Four, women can be marginalised and excluded as men continue to hold dominant positions in surf culture hierarchies. Or, women with less skill can gain access to capital through their relationships with male surfers. Yet, some women challenge this male hierarchy as they paddle out at the points and compete with men for waves. Recently while in the participant observer role, one of my female companions Sage explained her interpretation of the gender difference in the line-up:

> If a guy paddles out to the line-up he is automatically going to be considered a good surfer, until he proves that he is not. If a girl paddles out to the line-up she is automatically considered not a good surfer, until she can prove to everyone that she is!

Again, issues of authenticity seem central for how women negotiate their identities within surf cultures social spaces. In relation to the above quote, trying to access and establish positions of power in the line-up is particularly difficult for the female surfer with great abilities, perhaps because these women pose the greatest threat the 'maleness' of the line-up. How women negotiate, experience and deal with these relations to men will be addressed next.

Women's Experiences of Men in the Line-Up

This section utilises the perspective of the more advanced women in the research which comprises three Point Wahine, Moana and Laura my two female interviewees, and Jamie,

a woman whom I spent a considerable amount of time talking with in the field. These women express their experiences and interpretations of their relationships to men in the line-up. Such dialogues presented a complex picture, with some women describing negative experiences with men in the surf and others suggest more positive relations in the waves. In the first part of the following discussion, I focus on the intimidation female surfers experience in the water from male participants. In the second part, I will draw upon Bourdieu's concepts of capital to explain how women access power in the line-up, or in other words, negotiate space for themselves at the points in order to catch more waves. These women discuss how they negotiate their gendered identities in a male dominated space and how they build upon their existing capital to enhance their position in the line-up.

Intimidation in the Line-Up

My discussion with the Point Wahine, regarding their experiences with men in the line-up, revealed both positive and negative elements.

Kate: [Guys] will have a barney pretty much about nothing. It really is about nothing at the end of the day other than their head-wanks going on.
Jane: Their egos.
Kate: They have had such a fucked up day.
Lisa: It's just testosterone though, isn't it?
Jane: They are competitive and hungry.
Kate: It was like, "this is my only break, and the only thing I was looking forward to all day, all fucked up day! And now you have just ridden that wave! You just totally *dropped-in* on me!" and that's when they get really violent! It is like "that was the last hope I had, the last bit of happiness that I had, and you have taken it!" It's so dramatic, it's really like that! I mean, here we were the other day at Manu, public holiday, Queen's birthday. There were forty, fifty people out and, he starts going off. As soon as he got in the water paddling out through the line-up, he starts "f-in wankers, F-in this, F-in that, F-in t-bags, what the F are you doing in the water, get

> the F outta here!" and all this. And after while I said, "Mitchell, stop it with the F word would you, it's terrible!" Honestly, you could hear him speaking like that for at least ten minutes! And he was so pissed off, and why did he get in the water anyway! You could see if from the sidelines that there were people in there, it would be party waves with everyone dropping in on everyone. He was just going nuts and it was just disgusting!

The Point Wahine suggest that some men can take surfing too seriously and become aggressive because of crowd levels as it becomes harder to access the limited resources in the field (waves). They also suggested some men assume authoritative roles and try to intimidate other surfers in the water. While some women view this as "disgusting" and were reluctant for it to affect their experiences, other women were intimidated by it. Moana was among the latter.

Moana arrived from Canada with only four years' surfing experience. She has been living in the Raglan community for one year and holds four jobs. Because of this, she has access to many members of the community and, therefore, has begun to build upon her social capital in the water. I asked her specifically about gender differences in the water.

> How does it feel to not be a woman in the water? I don't know. How does it feel to be a man in the water? I imagine that to be a man in the water would be a lot more competitive. You would have to deal with the whole testosterone factor. Gender is huge actually and it would be interesting to see what everyone else would have to say because other women may not even give a shit that there's fifty men bobbing around them. I do, but I am intimidated by men!

In order to enjoy her surfing experiences, Moana describes the need to separate herself from men who she perceives as threatening and affiliates herself more with women.

> I feel more comfortable striking up a conversation with a woman just randomly, than I would a guy. It's just looking out for one of your own. With guys there is just that whole sexual aspect I always have in the back of my head. Guys are like, "oh, hot surfer chicks". I do just not want to have anything to do with that. Really, I don't want to be flirtatious and I am not flirtatious in the water at all!

Moana feels reluctant to sit close to men in the water and is conscious of her identity as a female surfer. This is especially evident when she clearly states, "no flirting", and is uninterested in the male-female interaction. A paradox exists here with Moana and for other women who experience men as intimidating in the surf. For example, Moana was interested in wearing her bikini during the summer months, for she believes wearing a bikini while surfing is the epitome of the surfing experience, but as men continually leer in her direction, she feels her performance is hindered.

> Men are distracting as they stare and leer at me. It takes away from my concentration because I start to become more concerned with them staring then trying to catch a wave. It's nice surfing in my bikini and I don't want to have to cover up just to surf!

Moana surfs to connect with nature and the "cleansing" experience it invokes, not to meet the desires of men. While she distances herself from this type of behaviour while negotiating the line-up, she creates a new feminine role for herself. She takes pride in not appearing delicate and graceful, so she purposefully appears standoffish and aggressive. In his discussion of surf culture in Western Australia, Waitt (2008: 87) explains how "crucially, while working with a code of honour, women-who-surf are scrutinised under a masculine heterosexual gaze… young women must endure the pick-up routines of straight men" (Waitt 2008: 87). Moana does, however, differentiate between men looking to flirt and those interested in her performance. She negotiates her performance and her

femininity; she is ‘feminine’ in her bikini, but ‘masculine’ in her approach. Kate agrees with Moana when she remarks, “You don’t have to go out there and bat your eyelids like a lot of the guys think either. You can just go out there and be yourself”.

Ford and Brown (2006) believe women who are able to perform and hold cultural status, are protected in the water primarily by their physical good looks. Knowing this, Moana and Kate are “challenging the social relationships in the surf through embodying the practice” (Waitt 2008: 91) and participating without renouncing what they consider to be their entitled surfing identity. “[W]omen-who-surf demonstrate an ability to move between discourse, breaking their friction when necessary, and opening-up alternative points of connection between surfers to rethink gender practice and gender meanings of surf space” (Waitt 2008: 92). In this way, Moana and Kate are challenging traditional perceptions of femininity in the water.

These women negotiate intimidation in the line-up by adopting ‘masculine’ approaches to surfing which was beneficial in the line-up as it helped them to access cultural, performance and symbolic capital and thus more waves. More so, these women were negotiating their relationships to men by communicating they took their surfing seriously and were uninterested in “flirting” or practising any other traditionally perceived ‘feminine’ traits while in the water. With this in mind, women with greater levels of capital(s) are more closely associated to that of men than that of beginning women. Therefore, they are more likely to be associated to men with higher abilities as a group. As a result, and a key point here, is that women with higher levels of ability, knowledge and performance seemed to reject women considered an ‘other’ based on their gendered identities and abilities. Jamie was a classic example.

Jamie was an elite surfer with fifteen years experience. Local surfers claimed Jamie 'surfed like a man'. This comment is considered to be a great compliment for some female surfers considering surfing is judged based on a male valuation system. While Jamie adopts 'male' attributes towards others in the water, she also embodies 'masculine' qualities in her surfing. Therefore, she is viewed as "access[ing] legitimate positions within these spaces through an aggressive surfing style" (Wait 2008: 91). In the surf, Jamie comments more on female surfers in the line-up than she does men. She believes women are too "noisy", they get in the way, and she understands "why men get so pissed off with girls in the water". She mostly views women in the water as overtly feminine and makes clear distinctions between women who can 'surf like men' and those that are just 'girlies' because "priority in the line-up is still assured to conventional performances of sporting masculinity; strong, skilled and aggressive rather than graceful surfers" (Waitt 2008:92). Jamie considers herself to be 'masculine' in the line-up, yet her approach to surfing is at times considered intimidating to other women. Because of this, women such as Jamie have ways of accessing capital in the line-up and positions of power similar to men. When female surfers 'play like boys', they theoretically are able to gain power in the line-up and challenge men for capital and access to waves.

Capital in the Line-up

Capital is important for negotiating positions of power. As Bourdieu argues, capital is "structured internally in terms of power relations and actors strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvements of their positions with respect to the defining capital" (Jenkins 2002: 85). Capital defines what is at stake and what agents can afford. Each kind

of capital helps to define and create the power relationships in the field. In order to manoeuvre through social practices, actors develop a 'feel for the game' by utilising the rules and strategising. In surf culture, women struggle to acquire similar social positions to men. However, some women gain performance capital based on their physical abilities and, therefore, more access to waves. Laura is an example because she is an elite surfer in Raglan and is also well renowned in the competitive circles. While Laura has access to performance and social capital (locally affiliated) and cultural capital (understanding of the line-up and how it works), some men find her high status threatening:

> I was getting lot of waves and I wasn't snaking anyone or anything like that, so he started paddling up my inside and he kept on doing it, and he kept on doing it. I said to him, "hey what are you up too? You keep paddling up my inside" It's just not etiquette. And he just sort of went off at me and said, "Oh you're getting heaps of waves!" It was more of an ego thing for him I think. I think he was just a bit gutted there was a girl out there actually getting more waves than him, you know, doing a bit better. By the time you have been [in Raglan] for a while, you can suss out who the locals are and you manage to get a lot more waves if you know who is local and who isn't. The people who aren't local, you can paddle past them easy. And get waves off them and I guess that could be intimidating to some people that there is a girl out there and she was doing a lot better.

Laura's comment highlights how she holds symbolic, culture, social capital. This was evident as Laura has established relationships with locals, has accumulated knowledge in the line-up in relations to the rules, and knew when someone was trying to snake her: "hey, what are you doing". With Laura's ability to negotiate the line-up and perform perhaps better than some male surfers, she shows how women are able to gain significant capital in the field. Further, her statement points out how women strategise in this space and break rules to gain access to waves, therefore, rule breaking and strategising are gender-neutral and based solely on possession of performance, social and cultural capital.

Despite some negative experiences with men in the water, the Point Wahine also discussed receiving support from some men:

Kate: I got hoots from guys to go for it.

Lisa: I think they were quite encouraging generally, eh! I found the whole men thing in the water to be real positive.

Jane: They'd, "this is yours, go go!" and let you go first, give you their wave. But that could be really intimidating. Sometimes you would be sitting in line for your wave, and they'd be sitting behind you fucking hungry. They were being polite and let you have your turn, but the pressure was on. It's your wave coming and you either make it, or you eat shit and go to the back of the line; wait again for the next one. The intimidation really just sucks.

The women also suggested their male companions put pressure on them to break rules. When some men encourage some women to break rules, the men are able to build upon their capital and gain more access to waves. As mentioned in Chapter Three, one way local male surfers create dominant positions in the line-up is to huddle into packs at the front of the queue. 'The pack' is a way to establish the social hierarchy and members within it are the cultural members defining what is at stake in the field, access to waves. In a particular surf session (time and space specific) the members in the pack hold the highest levels of symbolic, social and cultural capital and, therefore, have the most access to waves. If women know any of these surfers or can prove through their abilities that they can catch waves and surf well, then they too could potentially have access to more waves via the pack. The Point Wahine slowly built their way into the pack through their social, symbolic and performance capital. The alliance between surfers (both male and female) is beneficial for all of the members in the pack. Lisa remembers the first time she was included into the pack.

> Jake took me out at jump rock for my first time, and as soon as we get out [to the pack] he goes, “right, your wave next Lisa!” And I thought, ok and there wasn’t a wave for ages. It took a good couple of minutes for a set to come and it was like, shit! I wish he never said that because it was just too much pressure. And then, that same surf I was getting told to drop in and just go, go ya know, and a lot of the local guys were just saying to me, “just go and don’t worry about him [the non-local surfers]”.

Initially, groups with lower levels of ability may not understand the power of this group cohesion as Lisa remembers the intimidation of the situation. Yet, as abilities and skill sets increase, women realise the advantages, and as they began to participate more often, they understand the advantage they have as women. As Laura explained:

Laura: [Being a woman] definitely has its advantages in terms of getting away with things. But I don’t try and use that too often. I definitely think that girls can get away with paddling around people and paddling up the inside and catching waves, more so than a guy. If a guy was to do that, then he would get a word. Someone would say something to him. I think girls can get away with it, but I personally don’t do it too often. You can drop in on people here and there throughout a surf and no one will say anything to you, you get away with it. There is still that, “give the girl a wave” or “let it slide” because it’s a girl sort of thing. It can be an advantage. So, I am conscious of it and I know that I could get away with things that guys wouldn’t get away with. It’s not very fair though.

According to Laura, women are able to “get away with more” because they had clear advantages in the line-up. If women are aware of these advantages in the line-up, they can utilise them to their advantages and access more waves. Laura knows if she breaks the drop-in rule, she suffers fewer consequences and is less likely to be “yelled at”. This was confirmed in Chapter Four by my male interviewees who both describe women as ‘less aggressive’ and ‘less serious’ in the line-up, and suggested they would less likely yell at a women if they broke rules. Therefore, for some female surfers gender

is a form of capital in the line-up. In this way, I would argue that some women have more room to manoeuvre and manipulate their positions of power in the line-up than male surfers. This is especially so for local female surfers with support from their local male surfing companions. Because of this, I would argue that this subtlety is the difference between men and women breaking the drop-in rule. Therefore, women have access to a different form of power (capital) in the line-up. This capital could be considered gendered and arguably, gender should be considered as a potential form of capital.

Gender as a group distinction signals social bonds and unity in a culture. This gender capital is not accessible to all female surfers, but is only accessible to the select few who also hold high levels of social and cultural capital in a similar group category or ability level. In her discussion of snowboard culture, Thorpe (2007: 286) explains how some female snowboarders "overtly employ their gender capital, whereas others privilege traditional masculine traits as forms of symbolic capital". However, some women are creating opportunities for themselves by learning the rules of the line-up, and then ultimately breaking them. The female surfer exposes how social positioning and status in the line-up are constructed and maintained through their practice and discourse in surf culture. Women utilise their strategies in the line-up by intentionally breaking rules to manipulate others in the field and gain similar social positions to men. In this way, they are challenging and resisting traditional notions of the gendered order of surfing.

In Summary

This chapter acknowledges the 'everyday' female surfer and their gendered experiences in the waves of Raglan. As women negotiate space for themselves in the line-up, they simultaneously reveal their strengths as women in the line-up as they build, gain and maintain symbolic, performance and social capital, but they reveal their vulnerabilities when they discuss how the line-up space can be intimidating because of 'others'. The women in this research expose the many mixed messages about female surfing identities in Raglan today as they negotiate an understanding of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Each woman asked herself, should I be aggressive and competitive, or graceful and delicate? What these women expose is how they each place various emphases on different points in their experiences, but at time they also emphasised commonalities void of ability. For example, the Beach Babes and Point Wahine expressed how they placed value on female companionship in motivating and inspiring each other to learn and progress, whereas Jamie experiences women in the water as a distraction. Nevertheless, Laberge (2004) argues that the mere act of female participation acts as a springboard for the resistance of gender relations by dislodging the gender hierarchy that sport helps preserve. As women are continually viewed to hold subordinate positions, they illustrate how the line-up becomes a contestable space for women to challenge traditional notions of gender and resisted traditional gender roles.

Before moving on to the final chapter, I would like to point out how women in the waters of Raglan have demonstrated that their participation is surf culture is spatial, dynamic and fluid as they "[s]erve as reminders that gender" in the "internal gender order in surfing was never total or fixed" (Ford and Brown 2006: 95-96). That women

participating in surf culture continue to challenge and resist traditional notions of the gendered order of surfing.

Chapter Six: Concluding the Surfing Journey

The purpose of this thesis was to explore gendered surfing experiences of men and women in Raglan. I set out on this research journey based on Ford and Browns (2006: 172) recommendation that more research needed to focus on the "'everyday' female surfer and their gendered experiences". As a dedicated surfer, I was initially intrigued with other women in the water and sought to inquire if women had similar experiences in the water as I did. Over the course of a year, I have spent a considerable amount of time immersed within the Raglan surfing community as a researcher. I was interested to know how women and men experienced, interpreted and negotiated the surfing spaces in which they participated. Most notably, I questioned, analysed and spent time unravelling the rules of the line-up, the established and predominant field in which surfers are able to access and build resources germane to surfing.

In order to gather the research data, I utilised the methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group sessions. Each was as a vital tool in the research process. Participant observation allowed me to "go out and stalk culture in the wild" (Bernard 2006: 344), while semi-structured interviewing and focus group sessions allowed me to ask the research participants pointed questions about their cultural experiences and surfing identities. Another vital tool in the production of this thesis was the theoretical perspective I adopted based on Bourdieu's theories of social space. This theory provided both the framework for the production of this thesis and a means for analysing the research data. I was able to utilise Bourdieu's conceptual tools of field (the established surfing line-up), capital (the various forms of resources that help to structure the social field), habitus (the enculturation of knowledge in/on the body), and practice

(the very act of participation) to better understand the surfing social hierarchies. Especially helpful has been the concept of capital which has assisted in explaining how surfers develop and draw upon their accumulated knowledge (cultural capital), their social relationships (social) and how they gain respect and honour (symbolic) in the line-up. Bourdieu's concepts have assisted in showing how men and women actively negotiate their identities with respect to nationality, ethnicity, age, and gender.

Bourdieu's concepts also limited the interpretations of the qualitative evidence. The limitation results from Bourdieu's belief that people are unable to recognise their conscious decisions and have little free will (Bouveresse 1999, Jenkins 2002, Reed-Danahay 2005). Bourdieu believed social practice is not consciously organised or orchestrated by intention. Social agents do learn how to manoeuvre their way through life, but do so without really knowing why. Bourdieu claimed that actors are "largely incapable" of perceiving their social reality as anything other than "the way things are". He argued that agents have an "illusion of an immediate understanding of [their] social reality" as individuals make choices, but "that they do not choose the principles of these actions" (Bourdieu 1989: 45). Because his conceptual tools do not allow much room for conscious thought, his approach limits the very premises of change (Reed-Danahay 2005). It could be argued that social actors in fact do change their circumstances as they learn cultural competences, utilising them favourably to gain access to resources. For example, my interviewee Laura was aware of the advantages she utilised as a woman in the line-up and made conscious decisions to break etiquette when it suited her mood and the social surroundings. She intentionally and, therefore, consciously was aware of her positioning of the line-up and chose to access more waves on a whim. Thus, actors are

essentially using their conscious thought to proceed forward and change their set of circumstances. Future research could examine in more detail those precise situations and moment when conscious thought does surface within the surfing domain. Such research could illustrate more specifically the limits of Bourdieu's theory. For example, there is great room from expiration of the habitus, where is the limit of habitus? Are there ever times when a surfer does know what he or she knows? How does conscious thought challenge Bourdieu's notion of habitus and allow for change? Regardless of the limits of Bourdieu's theory, his framework and concepts enabled me as a researcher to make sense of the very complex domain of the surfing social phenomenon.

Research Findings

Initially, I believed the research process would uncover a world of difference between men and women in the line-up. I expected that gender was perhaps the primary point of difference and therefore tensions, between cultural members. I spent a considerable amount of time questioning the participants about their gendered counterparts and watching men and women as they participated in the water. Yet, as the research process unfolded, I began to see that gender was just one of many points of difference among surfers and, in fact, seemed less significant than other factors including equipment, nationality, local status and ability. It became clear that all of these points of difference had a role to play as surfers socially constructed their surfing space. For example, surfers with similarities in their cultural identities (e.g. local, advanced surfer, shortboarder) accessed and sustained power positions in similar ways to one another that was more gender-neutral. I also found that the men and women who had accumulated

extensive cultural knowledge and athletic abilities had similar ways of negotiating the surfing space when it came to manipulating the setting and breaking of rules. Because of this, gender differences were less likely to affect the social hierarchy for surfers and even appeared to be mechanism for unity when gaining access to resources in the surfing domain, particularly, access to waves. In short, exclusionism and marginalisation in the surfing line-up were based more on surfers' athletic ability, their cultural knowledge, and their identities as 'locals'. Although gender was a factor in marginalisation, it was not a primary factor in the exclusion or hierarchy-creation of surf culture members in the line-up.

The female participants did, however, highlight how female companionship was important in the initial motivation and inspiration for women to continue their surfing journeys. Women with advanced abilities had great opportunities to gain social, symbolic and cultural capital in the line-up and use it to their advantage. The subtle differences between men and women that did manifest seemed to be associated with the rules and etiquette when lining up. It appeared through the statements offered by my participants that women suffered fewer consequences when dropping-in and were able to break rules with fewer consequences than men. Because of this subtlety, it could be argued that gender is best thought of as a potential form of capital in surfing's social spaces. Similar to Thorpe's (2007: 249) discussion of women's roles in snowboard culture, "gender distinction is a secondary principle of division" and "the embodied practices" of participants "suggests that an individuals' initial capital is gender-neutral, being fundamentally defined by their relative position in the structure based on their commitment to the activity and lifestyle".

As mentioned in Chapter One, I began the research journey hoping to better understand how women in Raglan's surf culture experienced their surfing sessions. Also, I was interested to grasp what the gender order of surfing entailed, how it played out in the water, and how the men and women might differently interpret surfing spaces. Booth (2000: 17) argued that much of the evidence supporting the changing gender order is "superficial" when saying "before any claims of a new gender order in surfing have validity, firm evidence of deep structural change is required". That change, he argued, "will emanate from well beyond the realm of surfing, and indeed, sport per se" (Booth 2000: 17). Further, Ford and Brown (2006:88) argued that women in surf culture "occupy dominant positions and engage in dominant practices that justify the so-called masculine 'traits'… [However, they] have arguably done rather less to challenge the symbolic gender order". Be that as it may, women's participation in Raglan's surf culture is "socioculturally located, rather than universal, dynamic rather than fixed, and contested rather than agreed" (Ford and Brown 2006: 88).

Initially, I thought my research would unmask the female participant as challenging the gender order of surfing and perhaps even changing it. Yet, in conclusion, I would have to agree with Booth, that claiming women have changed the gender order of surfing is in fact superficial as women continue to hold subordinate positions to men. In order for change to occur, both men and women alike will have to change their perceptions on the socially constructed gender order of society.

Even though women in surf culture resist traditional notions of gender through the act of participation, and discover new ways of negotiating their gendered identities, their resistance does not appear to be transformative. This conclusion is in line with Birrel and

Theberg (1994: 371) who state that “premature or naive celebrations of resistance may undermine the motivations for transformation… [R]esistance, in and of itself, is not change, and change is the goal of political action”. These authors further suggest that transformation must be accomplished in a larger sphere of human relation because “transformative resistant acts must be overtly political, which implies an analysis of power relations and a demonstratable attempt to undermine them” (Birrel and Theberg 1994: 362). In saying this, future research could look more deeply into any and all resistant acts to understand how resistance in surf culture may possibly achieve transformation of the gender order. Perhaps cross-cultural studies between New Zealand and other western countries would help to unravel how women in the global surf culture resist traditional notions of gender, and how a global network is an “important site for fighting gender oppression and contesting gender relations” (Kay and Laberge 2004: 156).

Both men and women alike are able to redefine gendered identity through their participation in surf culture as they resist traditional gender norms. Today, sport discourse is more focused on the integration of gender versus that of separation (Kay and Laberge 2004). As Shilling (2005: 123) argues, “perhaps the boundaries of sporting identity are moving away from traditional conceptions of masculinity, femininity, class or race, and towards the cellular and molecular factors that sport scientists associate with sporting capacity”, moving beyond the cultural and back towards the biological. Men and women alike are experiencing different ways of physicality, sexuality and identity as they both continue to ‘do’ sport.

Limitation of the Research

Hall (2002) argues that in text 'gender' has ultimately come to mean 'women' and that it should be understood in research and literature today to encapsulate *both* the sexes. "[S]lowly but surely, the discourse of gender and sport is finally moving away from an exclusive and restrictive focus on women and femininity to the nature of gendered social behaviour and the impact of gendered social structures on both sexes" (Hall 2001: 14). It is important to view the sporting arena as a reflection of our social order and understand the small yet relevant resistance felt within it. Hall claims (2002:13) "woman centred research and scholarship are also sexist but in a reverse way [because it] is a gynocentric model of social reality as opposed to an andocentric one, and it has been an extremely useful and productive way to recognise and counter andocentric, sexist scholarship". With this in mind, one limitation in the current research is that the male perspective on surfing was not obtained in balance to the female perspective, although in accordance with Hall perhaps my focus on men has less validity than men studying men. However so, I did not hold male focus group sessions nor did I elicit confirmation from male beginners. This limitation suggests that the male perspective in the present exploration may be somewhat incomplete particularly with respect to the male perspective on learning to surf. I would perhaps have gained more insight into difference and/or similarity in experience between men and women with respect to athletic ability.

Additional Future Research

It seems that other factors such as ability, nationality, ethnicity, and preferred surfing technology also played a part in the mounting tensions in the waters of Raglan. As the social spaces become more crowded, surfers of common identities work collaboratively to help ensure and access to surfing resources and particularly access to waves through negotiating the line-up. Therefore, I believe future research could look more directly at how factors of ability, nationality and even that of ethnicity may hinder a novice surfer's learning curve as they begin cultural initiations as subordinate in relation to others. Does the subordination of women in the water hinder their learning curves? Do men subordinate and, therefore, deter women from progressing towards higher positions of power in the line-up? Do locals subordinate blow-ins of both genders? Do female novice surfers take longer to progress in the social hierarchy because of their gendered identities? What are the differences/commonalties in the learning experiences of men and women?

Additionally, I think there is a bigger picture question that may be addressed through future research as highlighted by Robert's rhetorical question.

> But then why are you surfing? To catch as many waves as you can and get as good as you can and come and make the most of your session, doing as many turns as you can on as many waves? Or are you just out there for the whole enjoyment out of it, the whole picture? Just being out there, sitting on your board and enjoying it. Maybe it is not only about riding on the waves.

His comments suggests there is much to be learned from considering why surfers continue to surf and what it is it about surfing that is so addictive? Perhaps future research could address these questions through a cross-cultural, multi-cited ethnographic

exploration from within New Zealand and beyond. Future research needs to address how factors of nationality, ethnicity and ability level all play a part in the identities of surfers around the world, and how these factors play a role in their progression in the surfing social hierarchy. Perhaps also there is a need to examine the notions of flow and edgework more completely and explicitly in trying to understand what it is about surfing that is perhaps not just about riding the waves.

This research has enabled me to reflect upon both my cultural identity as a surfer and to better understand the gendered perspectives and positioning of men and women who participate. The research examined surfing as a contested space and a site for identity construction of male and female surfers. I believe this research has been successful in sharing the many perspectives and voices of the men and women surfing in the waters of Raglan. It appears that the surfing experiences are situated in the Raglan surf culture and the importance of the experience is relevant to the ambitions of surfers themselves. Such ambitions became visible throughout this as the 'everyday' surfers experiences in the Raglan community express their love for a pastime that has become a means to play, to enjoy one another, for it is the experiences they find through surfing that invokes community, self awareness, and forms identities for surfers in contemporary Western society. I have worked to respect this belief in this study.

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